Pope Francis arrives in Bangkok, the first leg of his Apostolic Journey

Restoring human dignity

Pope Francis arrived in Bangkok on Wednesday, 20 November, at the start of a three day visit to Thailand, the first leg of a journey that will also take him to Japan. In a welcome ceremony at the Government House on Thursday, 21 November, Pope Francis appealed to Authorities and members of civil society to increase efforts to fight human trafficking and called for greater international commitment to protect women and children “who are violated and exposed to every form of exploitation”. In his address to the Supreme Buddhist Patriarch of Thailand at the Wat Ratchabophit Sathit Maha Simaram Temple in Bangkok, the Pope confirmed the Church’s commitment to open and “respectful dialogue in the service of peace”. Later, Francis met medical staff at St Louis Hospital, where he praised their valuable service to the Thai people. After paying a courtesy visit to His Majesty the King, Pope Francis celebrated Holy Mass to mark the 350th anniversary of the founding of the ‘Mission de Siam’, celebrating the arrival of the first European Catholic missionaries in the 17th century.

Freedom is a co-responsibility

ANDREA MONDA

Freedom as a responsibility, indeed, a co-responsibility. This is the first message that Pope Francis wished to bring to Thailand, starting with the very meaning of its name: “This land bears the name ‘freedom’. We know that freedom is possible only if we are capable of feeling co-responsible for one another and of eliminating every form of inequality”, the Holy Father said during his discourse to Authorities at Government House on Thursday morning. Immediately afterwards, in the warm encounter with the Supreme Buddhist Patriarch in the Royal Temple, the Pope expressed his gratitude that the word “freedom” did not remain a dead word but rather became embedded in relations among religious ever since: “some four and a half centuries ago, Catholics have enjoyed freedom in religious practice, despite their being in a minority, and for many years have lived in harmony with their Buddhist brothers and sisters”. He reiterated this in his homily for the Mass celebrated in the crowded National Stadium: “This year marks the 350th anniversary of the creation of the Apostolic Vicariate of Siam (1669-2019), a sign of the fraternal embrace brought forth in these lands. Two missionaries alone were able to sow the seed”.

Recalling the dawning of the Catholic Church in these lands, the Pope implicitly turned to Gustav Mahler’s image of tradition that is very dear to him (preservation of fire, not worship of the ashes) because freedom is not “nostalgia for the past, but a fire of hope”. It is this fire that makes the Christian a “missionary disciple”, an expression which...
FabC President welcomes Papal visit

The hopes of Asian bishops

Pope Francis’ Apostolic visit to Thailand and Japan is a “moment of grace for Christians and others in these countries.” This is how Cardinal Charles Maung Bo of Yangon, Myanmar, describes the Holy Father’s 20-26 November visit to the two nations “steeped in deep spiritual traditions”. The Pope’s interest in the Eastern spiritual tradition which considers nature and the biosphere; his Encyclical Laudato Si’; and the special Synod on the Amazon: all signs of the Pope’s admiration for Eastern spiritual tradition which considers every living being “a part of God’s presence”.

Recalling the great challenges posed by climate change which has adversely affected both Thailand and Japan, Cardinal Bo says he expects the Holy Father to address the issue during his Asian visit. “May this spiritual encounter be showers of blessings on every one in these countries”, the Cardinal concludes, and may “a new dawn of peace and prosperity emerge in our great continent”.

Pope to Thai youth in Thailand

Don’t spend your life sitting on a couch

In a smartphone video recorded shortly after his arrival at the National Stadium, Pope Francis wished to offer some advice to Thailand’s youth: “never stay down; immediately get up”, and don’t spend “your life sitting on the couch”. The Pope’s words were shared with Thai youth taking part in a prayer vigil on Wednesday evening, 20 November. The following is the English text of the Pope’s remarks which were recorded in Spanish.

Dear Young Friends,

I know that this evening you are keeping a vigil of prayer, you are praying. And I know that others are still on your way, journeying here. How beautiful these two things are: to pray and to journey!

There are two things that we have to do in life. We have to keep our hearts open to God, since we receive our strength from him, and we have to keep journeying, because in life nothing ever stands still. A young person cannot retire at the age of twenty! He or she must keep walking. He or she must always keep moving forward, always going uphill.

One of you can say to me: “Yes, Father, but sometimes I am weak and I fall”. That doesn’t make any difference! There is an old Alpine song that says: “In one act of climbing, the important thing is not to keep from falling, but never to remain down on the ground”.

I offer you these two pieces of advice. Never stay down. Immediately get up; let someone help you to get up. That’s the first thing. The second thing is: Don’t spend your life sitting on a couch! Live your life, build your life, do it, keep moving forward! Keep advancing on the journey, get involved and you find extraordinary happiness. I can assure you of that.

May God bless you. I am praying for you, please pray for me.

A. M.
To Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps

Protecting women and children from abuse

During the flight to Thailand, the first stop of his 32nd Apostolic Journey, on Tuesday evening, 19 November, Pope Francis greeted some 70 journalists and members of civil society, saying "good evening, thank you for accompanying me on this journey and thank you for your work. It is so good for me to read these cultures that are far from the West".

Before taking his seat on the Alitalia flight, Pope Francis stopped to greet the 58-year-old pilot, Captain Alberto Galalotti, the three co-pilots and six flight attendants. Earlier that evening, before leaving the Casa Santa Marta for Rome’s Fiumicino airport, Pope Francis met with a dozen elderly people hosted by the Little Sisters of the Poor in San Pietro in Vincoli parish. The group was accompanied by the Papal Almoner, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski. On Tuesday morning, as has become his custom ahead of a foreign journey, the Pope paid a visit to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome where he spent some time in prayer before the image of Our Lady Salus Populi Romani.

On Wednesday, 20 November, after the 11-hour flight from Rome, the Holy Father arrived at Bangkok Airport. To welcome him were a representative of the Royal Council of Thailand, Government authorities and members of the Bishop’s Conference of Thailand.

Eleven children representing Thai dioceses and the country’s 200,000 faithful, were also there to greet him. The Holy Father was then driven to the Nunciature where he rested the remainder of the day. On Thursday morning, 21 November, the Pope received an official welcome at Government House where he met privately with Thai Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-ocha, before addressing authorities, members of civil society and the diplomatic corps. The following is the English text of the Pope’s address.

Mr Prime Minister, Members of the Government and the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Political, Civil and Religious Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful for this opportunity to be with you and to be able to visit this land so rich in natural beauty, and the splendid guardian of age-old spiritual and cultural traditions, like that of the hospitality I have personally experienced, and which I would like in turn to spread, thus increasing bonds of greater friendship between peoples.

I thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for your welcome and for your kind words of introduction, and for your attentive and humble gesture. I am grateful that this afternoon I will have the opportunity to pay a courtesy visit to His Majesty King Rama X and the royal family. I once more thank His Majesty for his gracious invitation to visit Thailand and I renew my best wishes for his reign, while paying sincere homage to the memory of his late father.

I have this opportunity to be able to greet and address you, governmental, religious and civil leaders, and through you to greet the entire Thai people. I likewise address a respectful greeting to the diplomatic corps. On this occasion, I readily offer my good wishes in the wake of the recent elections, which signified a return to the normal democratic process.

I thank, too, all those who worked to make this visit possible.

We know that the challenges facing our world today are indeed global problems, embracing the entire human family and calling for a firm commitment to international justice and solidarity between peoples. I consider it significant to note that, in these days, Thailand will conclude its chairmanship of ASEAN, an expression of its historic engagement with the broader issues and challenges facing the peoples of the entire South East Asia region and also its continuing interest in fostering political, economic and cultural cooperation in the region.

As a multi-ethnic and diverse nation, Thailand is keenly aware of the importance of building harmony and peaceful coexistence between its numerous ethnic groups, while showing respect and appreciation for different cultures, religious groups, thoughts and ideas. Our age is marked by a globalization that is all too often viewed in narrowly economic terms, tending to erase the distinguishing features that shape the beauty and soul of our peoples. Yet the experience of a unity that respects and makes room for diversity serves as an inspiration and incentive for all those concerned about the kind of world we wish to leave to our children.

I am pleased to know of your initiative to create a social ethics commission and to invite the traditional religions of the country to take part, so as to receive their contributions and to keep alive the spiritual memory of your peoples. In this regard, I will have the opportunity to meet with the Supreme Buddhist Patriarch as a sign of the importance and urgency of promoting friendship and interreligious dialogue, also in the service of social harmony and the building of just, responsive and inclusive societies. I would like personally to assure you of the full commitment of Thailand’s small but vibrant Catholic community to maintain and promote the distinctive characteristics of the Thai people, as evoked in your national anthem, peaceful and loving, but not cowardly. They are likewise firmly resolved to confront all that would lead us to be insensitive to the cry of our many brothers and sisters who yearn to be freed from the yoke of poverty, violence and injustice. This land bears the name “freedom”. We know that freedom is possible only if we are capable of feeling co-responsible for one another and of eliminating every form of inequality. Hence the need to ensure that individuals and communities can have access to education, dignified work and health care, and in this way attain the indispensable minimal levels of sustainability that can enable an integral human development.

Here I would like to dwell briefly on the movements of migration that are one of the defining signs of our time. Not so much for the movements in themselves, as for the conditions in which they take place, a phenomenon that represents one of the principal moral issues facing our generation. The global crisis of migration cannot be ignored. Thailand itself, known for the welcome it has given to migrants and refugees, has experienced this crisis as a result of the tragic flight of refugees from nearby countries. Once more, I express my hope that the international community will act with responsibility and foresight, will work to solve the issues that have led to this tragic exodus, and will promote safe, orderly and regulated migration. May every nation devise effective means for protecting the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, who face dangers, uncertainty and exploitation in their quest for freedom and a decent life for their families. It is not just about migrants; it is also about the face we want to give to our societies.

Here I thank, too, all of those women and children of our time, especially those who are wounded, violated and exposed to every form of exploitation, enslavement, violence and abuse. I express my appreciation for the Thai government’s efforts to eradicate this scourge, and for all those private individuals and organizations working to uproot this evil and to provide ways to restore their dignity. In this year that marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent, we are all invited to reflect on the need to protect the welfare of our children, their social and intellectual development, their access to schooling, and their physical, psychological and spiritual growth (cf. Addressee to the Diplomatic Corps, 7 January 2010). The future of our peoples is linked in large measure to the way we will ensure a dignified future to our children.

Dear friends, today, more than ever, our societies need “artisans of hospitality”, men and women committed to the integral development of all peoples within a human family committed to dwelling in justice, solidarity and fraternal harmony. Each of you, in various ways, has devoted your life to enabling the service of the common good to reach every corner of this nation; this is one of the noblest tasks any person can undertake. With these sentiments, and with prayerful good wishes that you may persevere in the mission entrusted to you, I invoke every divine blessing on this beloved nation, on its leaders and its people. And I ask the Lord to guide each of you, and your families, in the ways of wisdom, justice and peace. Thank you!"
IN THAILAND

To the Supreme Buddhist Patriarch

The culture of encounter is possible

On this path of mutual trust and fraternity, I wish to reiterate my personal commitment, and that of the whole Church, to furthering an open and respectful dialogue in the service of the peace and well-being of this people. Thanks to scholarly exchanges, which lead to greater mutual understanding, as well as the exercise of contemplation, mercy and discernment — common to both our traditions — we can grow and live together as good “neighbours”. We will likewise be able to promote among the followers of our religions the development of new charitable projects, capable of generating and multiplying practical initiatives on the path of fraternity, especially with regard to the poor and our much-abused common home. In this way, we will contribute to the formation of a culture of compassion, fraternity and encounter, both here and in other parts of the world (cf. ibid.). I am sure, Your Holiness, that this journey will continue to bear fruit in abundance.

Once again, I thank Your Holiness for this meeting. I pray that you may be granted every divine blessing for your own health and well-being, and for your high responsibility of guiding the followers of Buddhism in the ways of peace and concord. Thank you!

Visit to Saint Louis Hospital

Called to welcome and embrace human life

The encounter with the sick and disabled was the most beautiful moment of the Holy Father’s visit to Bangkok’s Saint Louis Hospital on Thursday, 21 November. The following is the English text of the Pope’s address at the hospital.

Dear Friends,

I am happy to have this opportunity to meet you, the medical, nursing and support staff of St. Louis Hospital and other Catholic hospitals and charitable agencies. I thank the Director for his kind words of introduction. It is a blessing for me to witness at first hand this valuable service that the Church offers to the Thai people, especially to those most in need. With affection, I greet the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres and all the other women religious present today, and I thank them for their quiet and joyful dedication to this apostolate over these many years. You enable us to contemplate the maternal face of God who bends down to anoint and template the maternal face of God. Today, this journey will continue to bear fruit in abundance.

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Pope Francis concluded the second day of his Apostolic Journey in Thailand with the celebration of Mass at the National Stadium on Thursday evening, 21 November. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily.

“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” (Mt 12:48).

With this question, Jesus challenged the crowd of his hearers to reflect on something apparently obvious and self-evident: Who are the members of our family, our relatives and loved ones? After allowing time for the question to sink in, Jesus then replies, “Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, sister, and mother” (v. 50). In this way, he subverts not only the religious and legal certitudes of the time, but also every undue claim on the part of those who thought themselves above him. The Gospel is an invitation and a freely bestowed right for all those who want to hear it.

It is surprising to see how full the Gospel is of questions that attempt to unsettle and stir the heart of the disciples, inviting them to set out to discover the truth that is capable of giving and generating questions that challenge us to open our hearts and minds to encounter a newness much more beautiful than we could possibly imagine. The questions of the Master are always meant to renew our lives and those of our communities with incomparable joy (Evangelii Gaudium, 11).

Such was the case with the missioners who first set foot in these lands. By hearing the Lord’s word and responding to its demands, they became capable of overpowering the “adjectives” that create division; this enabled them to discover the many Thai “mothers and brethren” who were still absent from their Sunday table. Not only to share with them everything that they themselves could offer, but also to receive what they received with faith and understanding of the Scriptures (cf. Dei Verbum, 8).

Without that encounter, Christianity would have lacked your face. It would have lacked the songs and dances that portray the Thai smile, so typical in your lands. The missioners came to understand more fully the Father’s loving plan, which is not limited to a select few or a specific culture, but is greater than all our human calculations and predictions. A missionary disciple is not a mercenary of the faith or a producer of proselytes, but rather a witness of the faith and understanding of the Scriptures (cf. Deus Verbum, 8).

This year marks the 350th anniversary of the creation of the Apostolic Vicariate of Siam (1669-2019), a sign of the fraternal embrace brought forth in these lands. Two missionaries alone were able to sow the seed that, from that distant time, has grown and flourished in a variety of apostolic initiatives that have contributed to the life of the nation. This anniversary is not a celebration of nostalgia for the past, but a free of hope to enable us, here and now, to respond with similar determination, strength and confidence to contemporary challenges that help us to go forth joyfully to share the new life born of the Gospel with all the members of our family whom we do not yet know.

All of us become missionary disciples when we choose to be a living part of the Lord’s family. We do this by sharing with others as he did. He ate with sinners, assuring them that they too had a place at the Father’s table and the table of this world; he touched those who were unclean and, by letting himself be touched by them, helped them to realize the closeness of God and to understand that they were blessed (cf. Ecclesiastes 11, 1).

Here I think of children and women who are victims of prostitution and human trafficking, humiliated in their essential human dignity. I think of young people enslaved by drug addiction and a lack of meaning that makes them depressed and destroy their dreams. I think of migrants, deprived of their homes and families, and so many others, who like them can feel orphaned, abandoned, “without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life” (Evangelii Gaudium, 49). I think also of exploited sinners and bypassed beggars.

All of them are part of our family. They are our mothers, our brothers and sisters. Let us not deprive our communities of seeing their faces, their wounds, their smiles and their hopes. Let us not prevent our communities experiencing the merciful balm of God’s love that heals their wounds and paves the way for the unction of the Holy Father’s homily.

Victims of prostitution are humiliated in their human dignity

Mass at the National Stadium of Bangkok

In Thailand

St. Louis Hospital: Called to welcome and embrace human life

Continued from page 4

rightly be seen as a powerful anointing capable of restoring human dignity in every situation, a gaze that grants dignity and provides support.

All of you, as members of this hospital community, are missionary disciples whenever you look at your patients and you learn to call them by name. I know that they were part of a family much larger than any based on blood lines, cultures, religions or ethnic groups. Impelled by the power of the Spirit, their bags filled with the hope brought by the good news of the Gospel, they set out in search of family members they did not yet know. They set out to seek their faces. Their hearts had to be opened to a new way of think-
Lunch with the Pope in the Paul VI Hall

Following the Angelus prayer on Sunday, some 1,500 vulnerable people of various educational status joined the Holy Father for lunch in the Paul VI Hall, which had been set up on a large dining table with 150 table settings. The occasion was jointly organized by the Pontifical Commission for the New Evangelization and Caritas, the Sant'Egidio charitable organizations and voluntary as-
sociations such as Caritas, the Sant'Egidio Community, the Ciclo San Pietro, the Leonian College and the Lateran university.

Fifty volunteers had turned out to prepare and serve the lunch for Popes Francesco and his guests. Besides the Dicastery for Promoting the New Evangelization, some 1,500 vulnerable people of various educational status joined the Holy Father for lunch in the Paul VI Hall, which had been set up on a large dining table with 150 table settings. The occasion was jointly organized by the Pontifical Commission for the New Evangelization and Caritas, the Sant'Egidio charitable organizations and voluntary associations such as Caritas, the Sant'Egidio Community, the Ciclo San Pietro, the Leonian College and the Lateran university.

The lunch, organized as part of the World Day of the Poor instituted by Pope Francis in 2016 with his Apostolic Letter Misericordia et Misera, was at this conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, was picked up around Rome. Special meals were prepared for the poor in parishes and in various charitable organizations and voluntary as-
sociations such as Caritas, the Sant'Egidio Community, the Ciclo San Pietro, the Leonian College and the Lateran university.

The same convivial lunch was given to some 1,500 vulnerable people of various educational status joined the Holy Father for lunch in the Paul VI Hall, which had been set up on a large dining table with 150 table settings. The occasion was jointly organized by the Pontifical Commission for the New Evangelization and Caritas, the Sant'Egidio charitable organizations and voluntary associations such as Caritas, the Sant'Egidio Community, the Ciclo San Pietro, the Leonian College and the Lateran university.

In the Vatican, before the meal began, Francis welcomed the guests and told them, “I hope that the Lord will bless you and your guests. Besides the Dicastery for Promoting the New Evangelization, some 1,500 vulnerable people of various educational status joined the Holy Father for lunch in the Paul VI Hall, which had been set up on a large dining table with 150 table settings. The occasion was jointly organized by the Pontifical Commission for the New Evangelization and Caritas, the Sant'Egidio charitable organizations and voluntary associations such as Caritas, the Sant'Egidio Community, the Ciclo San Pietro, the Leonian College and the Lateran university.

During his homily for Holy Mass in Saint Peter’s Basilica on Sunday, 24 November, on the occasion of the Angelus on Sunday, the Holy Father urged the faithful not to fall into a fatalism ‘pair of shoes and end of the future’. The following is the English text of the Pope’s reflection.

Do not be paralyzed by fear of the other or of the future

Holy Father’s appeal at Mass for World Day of the Poor

By your entire.

The Lord calls us to cooperate in the constuction of history, becoming, together with Him, peacemakers and witnesses of hope in a future of salvation and resurrection. Faith makes us walk with Jesus on even the most tortuous roads of this world, for the certainty in the power of His Providence will bear the forces of evil, subjugating them to the power of love. Love is effective because it is powerful, and that it is love. The Churcsh makes us an experience to — not more than those at the beginning — who, despite persecutions, are witnesses of Jesus and of the world. They hand on an inheritance of love. I wish to encourage you, above all, with the Cross of Christ and of supervisors. The Lord calls us to cooperate in the constuction of history, becoming, together with Him, peacemakers and witnesses of hope in a future of salvation and resurrection. Faith makes us walk with Jesus on even the most tortuous roads of this world, for the certainty in the power of His Providence will bear the forces of evil, subjugating them to the power of love. Love is effective because it is powerful, and that it is love. The Churcsh makes us an experience to — not more than those at the beginning — who, despite persecutions, are witnesses of Jesus and of the world. They hand on an inheritance of love. I wish to encourage you, above all, with the Cross of Christ and of supervisors.
To the Director of the United Nations World Food Programme

Food waste prevents people from progress

Waiting food is a “phenomenon that increasingly weighs on our conscience”, Pope Francis said in a Message to the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on the occasion of the opening of the WFP’s second regular session of the Executive Board. The following is the English text of the Pope’s Message.

On the occasion of the opening of the second regular session of the World Food Programme, I am pleased to greet Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director, and Ambassador Hisham Mohamed Badr, current President of the Executive Board, together with members and participants.

At the beginning of this new session, you are seeking to formulate practical initiatives aimed at making more effective the fight against hunger in the world. Your many projects include promoting decisive measures to eliminate food waste, a phenomenon that increasingly weighs on our conscience.

In many places, our brothers and sisters do not have access to sufficient and healthy food, while in others, food is discarded and squandered. This is what my predecessor Saint John Paul II called the paradox of abundance, which continues to be an obstacle to resolving the problem of feeding humanity (cf. Address at the Opening of the International Conference on Nutrition, 5 December 1996).

This paradox involves mechanisms of superficiality, negligence and selfishness that underlie the culture of waste. Unless we recognize this dynamic and seek to contain it, it will be difficult to honor the commitments of the Paris Agreement on climate change and realize the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Accomplishing this objective is the responsibility not only of international organizations and governments, but of everyone. Families, schools, and the communications media have an important task in educating and raising awareness in this regard. No one can be considered exempt from the need to combat this culture that oppresses so many peoples, especially the poor and vulnerable in society.

The World Food Programme contributes to this cause by recently launching its global campaign Stop the Waste, highlighting the fact that food waste damages the lives of many individuals and prevents the progress of peoples. If we wish to build a future where no one is left behind, we must create a present that radically rejects the squandering of food. Together, without losing time, by pooling resources and ideas, we can introduce a lifestyle that gives food the importance it deserves. This new lifestyle consists in properly valuing what mother Earth gives us, and will have an impact on humanity as a whole.

I assure you, in addition, that the Catholic Church is working to foster solidarity among all people and desires to cooperate with the World Food Programme by reaffirming that each human being has a right to healthy and sustainable nutrition.

I would like this campaign to help assist all those who in our time suffer the effects of poverty, and to demonstrate that whenever a person is put at the centre of political and economic decisions, peace and stability are consolidated between nations, even as mutual understanding, the foundation of authentic human progress, everywhere increases.

May your commitment and dedication awaken in all people of good will the desire to build a new and better world under the banner of fraternity, justice and peace. May God bless all those who walk on this path.

From the Vatican, 18 November 2019

Francis’ Mercy Friday

New night and day centre for the homeless

On Friday afternoon, 15 November, as part of his series of Mercy Friday visits to those in need, the Holy Father inaugurated a new night and day centre for the homeless, just a few metres away from the colonnade of Saint Peter’s Square. The new square metre Vatican-owned building was recently vacated by a women’s religious congregation. The four story Palazzo Migliori, which still bears the name of its original owners, is located outside the Vatican walls and dates back to the early 1800’s. It was acquired by the Holy See in 1930.

The third and fourth floors of the former palace, which was allocated for its new purpose at the specific request of Pope Francis, will be used as dormitories with a capacity to host 50 men and women, a figure to increase during extreme winter weather.

Palazzo Migliori’s first and second floors will offer guests counseling, spaces for computers and reading, and recreational, educational and cultural activities. The centre will also serve breakfast and dinner. The kitchen facilities will also be used by volunteers and permanent deacons of the Diocese of Rome to prepare more than 250 hot meals to be distributed to Rome’s poor who take shelter in the city’s main train stations.

Structural renovations to adapt the building to its new use were carried out by a group of homeless people in cooperation with building contractors. Funded by the Office of Papal Charities through donations received for Papal Blessings and from individuals and businesses, the new shelter will be jointly supported by the Office of Papal Charities and the Sant’Egidio Community.

Earlier on Friday, the Pope had visited the free, temporary walk-in clinic for the poor in Saint Peter’s Square, greeting medical staff, volunteers and vulnerable and homeless patients.

Society’s indifference causes suffering

I greet all the pilgrims who have come from Italy and from different countries. In particular, I greet the Ecuadorian Community of Rome who are celebrating the Virgen del Quinche, the faithful of New Jersey and those of Toledo, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from various countries and the Italian Association of Marian Shrine assistants in the World. I greet the groups from Porto d’Achili and Anghiari, and those taking part in the pilgrimage of the La Salle Schools in Turin and Vercelli for the conclusion of the third centenary of the death of Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle.

On Tuesday I shall begin my journey to Thailand and Japan: I ask you for a prayer for this Apostolic Journey. And I wish you all a happy Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch and Ar-"
Ban all forms of abuse against minors

Pope Francis calls for concrete and urgent initiatives to defend the youngest

A crucial aspect of the problem concerns the technology which ultimately becomes a conflict — between the idea of the digital world as a realm of unlimited freedom in expression and communication, and the need for a responsible use of technologies that increasingly recognize their limits.

The protection of complete freedom of expression is linked to the protection of privacy through increasingly sophisticated forms of message encryption, which would make any control extremely difficult, if not impossible. A fitting balance must be found between the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and the interests of society, so as to ensure that digital media are not used to perpetrate criminal activities against minors in the digital world, in the name of advancing the development of the internet and its many benefits, companies that provide services that are long considered themselves mere suppliers of technological platforms, neither legally nor morally responsible for the way they are used.

The potential of digital technology is enormous, yet the possible negative impact of its abuse in the area of human trafficking, the planning of terrorist activities, the spread of hatred and extremism, the manipulation of information and — we must emphasize — in the area of child abuse, is equally significant. Public opinion and lawmakers are currently coming to realize this. How can we help them take suitable measures to prevent abuse? Allow me to emphasize two things.

First. Freedom and the protection of privacy are values and goods that need to be balanced with the common good of society. Authorities must be able to act effectively, using appropriate legal and moral measures that fully respect the rule of law and due process, in order to counter criminal activities that harm the life and dignity of minors.

Second. Large companies are key players in the astonishing development of the digital world, they cut across national borders, are at the cutting edge of technological advances, and have accumulated enormous profits. It is now clear that they cannot consider themselves completely unaccountable vis-à-vis the services they provide for their customers. So I make an urgent appeal to them to assume their responsibility towards minors, their integrity and their future. It will not be possible to guarantee the safety of minors without the full involvement of companies in this sector and without a full awareness of the moral and social repercussions of their manage- ment and functioning. Such companies are bound by the law, but also to be concerned with the direction taken by the technological and social developments which they promote and facilitate, since such developments are far from inevitable and must be scrutinized and facilitated in a manner that guarantees their right dimensions.
Ban on violence and all forms of abuse of minors

Conference on the protection of minors in the digital world

The high-level international and interfaith meeting, “Promoting Digital Child Dignity – From Concept to Action” was held from 14 to 15 November in the Vatican’s Casina Pio iv, the headquarters of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. Some eighty people, including religious leaders, civil authorities and representatives of multinational technology companies, international organizations and NGOs, took part in the meeting aimed at finding ways to make the Internet a safer environment for children and vulnerable people, through cooperation and concrete action.

Participants were received in audience by Pope Francis on the opening day of the meeting. Among the speakers at the conference were H.H. Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of the United Arab Emirates; H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden; Prof. Ahmed el Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al Azhar; Rabbi David Rosen and Ms Naat Maalla M’jid, Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children. His Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, sent a message to participants for the occasion.

From concept to action

The development of technology and the digital world involve huge economic interests. The influence that these interests tend to have on the conduct of companies cannot be overlooked. There is a need to ensure that investors and managers remain accountable, so that the good of minors and society is not sacrificed to profit. We have seen how society has grown more sensitive to the areas of environmental care and respect for the dignity of labour. A similar concern for the effective protection of minors and the fight against pornography should become increasingly felt in the finance and the economy of the digital world. The safe and sound growth of our young is a noble goal worth pursuing; it has far greater value than mere economic profit gained at the risk of harming young people.

In a world like ours, where boundaries between countries are continually blurred by the developments in digital technology, our efforts should emerge as a global movement associated with the deepest commitment of the human family and international institutions to protecting the dignity of minors and every human person. This demanding task sets before us new and challenging questions. How can we defend the dignity of persons, including minors, in this digital age, when the life and identity of an individual is inseparably linked to his or her online data, which new forms of power are constantly seeking to possess? How can we formulate shared principles and demands in the globalized digital world? These are challenging questions that call us to cooperate with all those working with patience and intelligence for this goal at the level of international relations and regulations.

Man’s creativity and intelligence are astonishing, but they must be positively directed to the integral good of the person from birth and throughout life. Every educator and every parent is well aware of this, and needs to be helped and supported in this task by the shared commitment born of a new alliance between all institutions and centres of education.

A contribution to this can be made not only by sound ethical reasoning, but also by vision and inspiration, which has universal scope because it places respect for human dignity within the framework of the grandeur and sanctity of God, the Creator and Saviour. In this regard, I am gratified by the presence of a number of distinguished religious leaders who, in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, have readily taken up the task of addressing these problems. I greet them with great respect and I thank them most heartily. We ought to be as one in the effort to protect minors in the digital world, now and in the future. For in this way, we bear witness to God’s love for each person, beginning with the smallest and the most vulnerable, so as to foster in everyone, in every part of the world and in every religious confession, concern, care and awareness. We must ban from the face of the earth violence and every form of abuse against children. Let us look into their eyes: they are your sons and daughters; we must love them as God’s masterpieces. They have the right to a good life. We have the duty to do everything possible to ensure that right.
**VATICAN BULLETIN**

**AUDIENCES**

Monday, 25 November
Heads of the Dioceses of the Roman Curia

Tuesday, 26 November
H.E. Mr João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, with his wife and entourage

Mr Og Dongyu, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, and entourage

Wednesday, 27 November
His Grace Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, with Archbishop Ian Ernest, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome and Representative to the Holy See.

Thursday, 28 November
H.E. Mr Martin Pascal Tine, Ambassador of Senegal, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Friday, 29 November
Members of the Presidency of the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR)

**FRIDAY, 15 NOVEMBER**

The Holy Father appointed Father Paulino H. Easton, from his Office as Director of the National Priestly Association for the Doctrine of the Faith; Bishop emeritus Benevenuto Sbardella, from his Office as Secretary General of the Pontifical Mission Societies; Bishop James Massa, from his Office as Executive Director of the Catholic Medical Mission Society; Bishop Jean-Louis Lacroix, from his Office as Secretary General of the Pontifical Missionary Union; Bishop Giacinto Borroni, from his Office as Secretary General of the Pontifical Missionary Union, Rome, and at the Pontifical Leonine College of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem.

**TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER**

The Holy Father appointed Bishop of Limasa, from his Office as Secretary General of the Pontifical Mission Societies; Mr Daniel Pasquin, national president of the Italian Sports Centre (11 Nov.).

**MONDAY, 11 NOVEMBER**

The Holy Father appointed Father Siprianus Hormat, from the clergy of Ruteng, Indonesia, Father of Ruteng. Until now he has served as auxiliary Bishop of Ruteng, Indonesia. He was ordained a priest on 24 June 2001. He has served in parish ministry.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop of Ruteng, Indonesia, Father Siprianus Hormat, from the clergy of Ruteng. Until now he has served as executive secretary of the Episcopal Commission in Jakarta (13 Nov.).

Bishop-elect Kizito, 52, was born in Karama, Uganda. He holds a degree in philosophy and in theology. He was ordained a priest on 27 September 1997. He has served in parish ministry.

**CHURCH PROVISION**

The Holy Father has ordained that the Diocese of Fairbanks, USA, be subject to common law. Until now it was dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (11 Nov.).

**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE**

The Holy Father appointed as members of the Pontifical Council for Culture the following:

Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cordoso, Apostolic Administrator of the See of Caracas, Archbishop of Caracas, Venezuela; Cardinal Joseph De Kerel, Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels, Military Ordinary for Belgium, President of the Episcopal Conference of Belgium; Cardinal José William Tobin, CCR, Archbishop of Newark, USA, Superior of Turks and Caicos, Great Britain; Cardinal Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Archbishop Jose Saraíña Palma, Archbishop of Cebu, the Philippines; Bishop Gerard Tlali Lerotholi, OMI, Bishop of Maseru, Lesotho; Bishop Marian Florscyk of Limata, Auxiliary of Kielce, Poland; Bishop Antonino Raspanti of Acriale, Italy (11 Nov.).

The Holy Father appointed as Consultants of the Pontifical Council for Culture the following:

Mrg Tamás Toth, Secretary of the Hungarian Episcopal Conference; Mr Jacques de Longueaux, professor at the Faculty of Theology Notre-Dame de Paris, France; Fr Eric Salberir, OP, professor of moral communication at the Catholic University of Paris, France; Fr Paolo Benatti, TOR, professor of bioethics and biotheology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, and at the Pontifical University of Anagni, Italy; Sr Dominica Dpîo, SMSC, professor of literature at the National University of Brasilia, Brazil; Mr Daniel Pasquin, national president of the Italian Sports Centre (11 Nov.).

**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

The Holy Father appointed as Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Father Ezequiel Bittar, OSB, as Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, and as Apostolic Nuncio to the Holy See, and with the former Auxiliary Bishop of Cuenca, the Philippines; Mr Daniel Pasquin, national president of the Italian Sports Centre (11 Nov.).

**RELATIONS WITH STATES**

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Gábor Pintér, titular Archbishop of Velburgus, as Apostolic Nuncio in Honduras. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Belarús (12 Nov.).

**START OF MISSION**

On 30 September, Archbishop Fortunatus Nkemene, titular Archbishop of Aquaviva, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Dominica, Greater Antilles, with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Charles Angelo Savarim, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

**CARDINAL TAKES POSSESSION**

On Sunday, 17 November, Cardinal Eugenio Dal Corso, PDDP, Bishop emeritus of Breglia, took possession of the Title of Santa Anastasia.

**NECROLOGY**

Bishop Victor Manuel Pérez Rojas, Bishop emeritus of San Fernando de Apure, Venezuela, at age 79 (12 Nov.).

Bishop Fernando Torres Durán, Bishop emeritus of Chiré, Panama, at age 82 (13 Nov.).

Bishop Bronislaw Dembowski, Bishop emeritus of Włocławek, Poland, at age 92 (16 Nov.).
A special gift
Interview with Sr Sivori, Pope Francis’ cousin and missionary in Thailand

ALESSANDRO GUARASCİ

Among the people whom Pope Francis will meet during his Apostolic Journey to Thailand, is also his cousin Sister Ana Rosa Sivori. The 77-year-old Salesian Sister is a member of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and serves in the all-girls Saint Mary’s School, one of five schools in the country run by the Institute. During the Pope’s visit, she will act as interpreter at some of his engagements. In an interview with Vatican News, Sister Ana Rosa retraces when she first arrived to Thailand more than 50 years ago and the great changes that took place over the years. 

There has been a truly big change and the country is continuing to change. I came as a missionary to help people know Jesus. As Pope Francis also says, quoting Benedict XVI: it is not a case of proselytizing but of being with them, leading them to know Jesus.

Pope Francis will also meet the sick, disabled people and the medical staff of Saint Louis Hospital. What is the situation there?

This hospital that Pope Francis will visit is a Catholic Hospital. There are two Catholic hospitals. One is run by the Camillians and this one of the country run by the Institute. During the Pope’s visit, she will act as interpreter at some of his engagements. In an interview with Vatican News, Sister Ana Rosa retraces when she first arrived to Thailand more than 50 years ago and the great changes that took place over the years. 

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