On mission

Ambassadors of a missionary Church

The Holy Father has decided to include one year of missionary service to the formation programme of Vatican diplomats

ANDREA TORNIELLI

Pope Francis’ decision to include a year in mission territory as part of the formation programme of diplomatic Nunciature personnel, comes only a few months after the announcement he made at the concluding speech of the Synod for the Amazon. This announcement is now becoming a reality for new students of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in the 2020/2021 academic year.

First of all, it is interesting to note the context in which this project was first announced: the need to send priests to the missions and the difficulty in finding available priests. The Pope had quoted the negative response one sometimes receives: “No, I am not suitable for this”. “Well”, the Pope had commented then, “this must be reformed... Young religious have a very great vocation and they should be trained in apostolic zeal to go to the frontier territories”. Immediately afterwards, Pope Francis spoke of future diplomats, hinting at a “suggestion” he had received that: “In the curriculum of the Holy See’s diplomatic service, young priests should spend at least one year in mission territory, but not doing an internship in the Nunciature as happens now, which is very useful, but simply at the service of a bishop in a mission area”.

Now this proposal is becoming concrete. In his letter to the President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, the Pope writes: “I am convinced that such an experience will be useful to all young people preparing for or beginning their priestly service, but especially to those who will be called to work with the Pontifical Representatives in the future and who may subsequently become Holy See Envoys to nations and particular Churches”. The commitment of future Apostolic Nuncios will thus serve as an example, so that...
Cardinal Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij, Archbishop of Bangkok, Thailand

Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, Major Penitentiary with Msgr Krzysztof Józef Nykiel, Regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary

Archbishop Franco Coppola, titular Archbishop of Vindia, Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico

Friday, 7 February

H.B. Cardinal Béchara Boutros Rai, OMM, Patriarch of Antioch for Syrians, Lebanon

H.B. Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako, Patriarch of Babylon for Chaldeans, Iraq

H.B. Patriarch Ignace Youssif III Younan of Antioch for Syrians, Lebanon

H.B. Patriarch Youssif Absi, MSpS, of Antioch for Melkite Greeks, Syria

H.B. Patriarch Grégoire Pierre XX Ghablean, ICLP, of Cilicia for Armenians, Lebanon

Archbishop Bernardino C. Auza, titular Archbishop of Suzacca, Nuncio Apostolic in Spain

Dr Juan Carlos Bokich

Saturday, 8 February

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, CSsR, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Monday, 10 February

Members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Region XIII), on a visit ad Limina Apostolorum

Cardinal Richard Ezzati Andrello, SDB, Archbishop emeritus of Santiago de Chile

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, CSsR, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Monday, 17 February

Meeting of the Council of Cardinals

Tuesday, 18 February

Meeting of the Council of Cardinals

NEW DIOCESE

The Holy Father raised the Territorial Prelacy of Cancun-Chetumal, Mexico, to the rank of diocese and has appointed Bishop Pedro Pablo Elizondo Cárdenas, LC, as the first bishop of the new diocese. Until now he has served as bishop prelate of the said Territorial Prelature (15 Feb).

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed as Apostolic Nuncio in Burkina Faso Fr Michael Francis Crosby, Nuncio-Counselor, at the same time raising him to the titular episcopal See of Lindsfarne, with the dignity of archbishop (1 Feb.).

Archbishop-elect Crosby, 49, was born in Mallow, Ireland. He was or- dained a priest on 3 July 1994.

The Holy Father accepted the resign- ature of Bishop Amando Samo of Caroline Islands, Federated States of Micronesia. He is succeeded by Bishop Julio Angkel. Until now he has served as coadjutor of the same diocese (1 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jorge Enrique Concha Cauyqueo, OSMI, as Bishop of Oosoro, Chile. Until now he has served as apostolic administr- ator sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis of Oosoro (5 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Sergio Hernán Pérez de Arriaga, S.S.CC., as Bishop of San Bartolomé de Chillán, Chile. Until now he has served as Apostolic ad- minister sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis of San Bartolomé de Chillán (5 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Hernán Pérez de Arriaga, 56, was born in Cor-

Amendment to the Statutes and the Internal Regulation of Caritas Internationals

The Holy Father Francis, at the audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Secretary of State, on the 15th of the month of January of the year 2020, considering the need to redefine the finality and regulations of Caritas Internationals

HAS APPROVED

the amendments to the Statutes and Internal Rules.

The Holy Father has also ordered that this Rescript be promulgated by publication in L’Osservatore Romano, coming into effect on the 1st of the month of February of 2020, and then published in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis.

From the Vatican, 1 February 2020

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Meekness brings people together
Anger separates

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In today's catechesis we consider the third of the eight Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt 5:5).

Here, the term “meek”, literally means sweet, docile, gentle, devoid of violence. Meekness manifests itself in times of conflict. It can be seen by how one reacts to a hostile situation. Anyone can appear meek when everything is peaceful, but how does one react “under pressure”, if one is under attack, offended, threatened?

In one passage, Saint Paul refers to “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor 10:1). Meanwhile, Saint Peter recalls the attitude of Jesus during his Passion: he did not respond nor threaten because “he trusted to him who judges justly” (1 Pt 2:23). And the meekness of Jesus can be clearly seen in his Passion.

In Scripture, the word “meek” also indicates one who does not have earthly property. Thus, we are struck by the fact that the third Beatitude says precisely that the meek “shall inherit the earth”. In reality, this Beatitude quotes Psalm 37 which we heard at the beginning of the catechesis:

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” The “earth” to conquer is the salvation of our brother and sister. There is no earth better than someone’s heart, no land more beautiful to gain than peace renewed with a brother or sister. This is the earth to inherit. (Pontifex)

Therefore the meek are those who “inherit” the most sublime of territories. They are not cowards, “weak” people who find a moral expedient to avoid difficulties. Quite the contrary! They are people who have received an inheritance and do not wish to squander it. The meek are not accommodating, but rather they are God’s disciples who have learned how to protect quite another earth. They protect their peace. They protect their relationship with God and they protect his gifts, God’s gifts, preserving mercy, fraternity, trust, hope, because meek people are merciful, fraternal, trusting people with hope.

Here we have to mention the sin of “anger”, a violent surge whose impulse we all understand. Who has not been angry at some point? Everyone [has]. We have to reconsider this Beatitude and ask ourselves a question: have we destroyed trust in the Lord and made peace impossible? No! We have to learn to consider our steps. In this way, one can rebuild with meekness.

The “earth” to be conquered with meekness is the salvation of that brother whom the Gospel of Matthew mentions: “If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” (Mt 18:15). There is no earth more beautiful than the heart of others. There is no finer territory to attain than that of the peace found again with a brother or sister. And this is the earth to be inherited through meekness!

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part today’s Audience, especially the groups from England, Norway, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam 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!

Lastly, I greet young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Trust in the Lord and make an effort to enter into his plans, accepting that his salvation can reach us through ways that may be different from what we might expect.
Distinguished gentlemen,
I am delighted to meet so many of you at the opening ceremony of the Judicial Year.

I know that many of you are involved in the Institutions responsible for the administration of justice and the protection of human rights. This is precisely why your work has precious value, because it is a guarantee not only of order, but above all of responsibility in the quality of the interpersonal relations experienced.

I ask you to pursue, with ever greater conviction, the journey of justice, as the path that allows for an authentic fraternity in which every person is protected, especially the weakest and most fragile.

The first point I would like to emphasize in this meeting is the Gospel. It teaches us a deeper view of the worldly mentality, and shows us that justice proposed by Jesus is not a simple set of rules applied technically, but an inclination of the heart that guides those who hold responsibility.

The great exhortation of the Gospel is to establish justice first of all within ourselves, struggling forcefully to tame the discord within us. For Jesus it is naive to think that we can remain pure every time evil within us without also damaging the good seed (cf. Mt 13:24-30). But vigilance over ourselves, and the consequent inner struggle, helps us to ensure that evil does not overcome good.

At the moment of judging, delving into the complexity of human affairs, you must provide the right answers, combining the correctness of the laws with even more mercy, as Jesus taught us. Indeed, mercy is not the suspension of justice, but its fulfilment (cf. Rom 13:8-10), since it restores everything to a higher order, where even those condemned to the harshest punishments find the redemption of hope.

The task of judging requires not only preparation and balance, but also passion for justice and awareness of the great and difficult responsibilities of judgment.

Your task cannot neglect the constant commitment to understanding the causes of error, and the frailty of those who have broken the law.

A second point of our reflection on justice is constituted by the laws that regulate interpersonal relationships and therefore their legality, as well as the ethical values that form the background.

In this regard, Vatican legislation has undergone significant reforms compared to the past, especially in the last decade, and particularly in the penal sector.

Underlying these important changes there was not only a natural need for modernization, but also and above all the need to respect the international commitments that the Holy See has also undertaken on behalf of the Vatican State. These commitments concern above all the protection of the human person, threatened in his/her very dignity, and the protection of social groups, often victims of new, odious, forms of illegality.

The main purpose of these reforms must, therefore, be part of the Church’s mission, indeed it is an integral and essential part of her ministerial activity. This explains the fact that the Holy See is working to share the efforts of the international community to build a just and honest coexistence, and above all attentive to the conditions of the most disadvantaged and excluded, deprived of essential goods, often trampled on in their human dignity and considered invisible and discarded.

In order to give concrete form to this commitment, the Holy See has begun a process of conforming its legislation to international laws norms and, on the operational level, has made a particular commitment to fight illegality in the field of finance at the international level.

To this end, it has nurtured relations of cooperation and sharing of policies and law enforcement initiatives, creating internal surveillance and intervention bodies capable of carrying out strict and effective controls.

These actions have recently brought to light suspicious financial situations, which arise from their possible unlawfulness, are not in keeping with the nature and purpose of the Church, and have generated dissatisfaction and anxiety in the community of the faithful.

These events have been brought to the attention of the judiciary, and have yet to be clarified in the files of criminal relevance. It is therefore not possible to comment on them at this stage.

In any case, given the full confidence in the work of the judicial and investigative bodies, and without prejudice to the principle of the presumption of innocence of people under investigation, a positive fact is that precisely in this case, the first reports were made by the Vatican’s internal Authorities, which have different competences, in the economic and financial sectors. This demonstrates the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement actions, as required by international standards.

The Holy See is firmly resolved to continue along the path undertaken, not only in terms of legislative reforms, which have contributed to a substantial consolidation of the system, but also by initiating new forms of judicial cooperation at the level of investigative bodies in the forms provided for by international norms and practice.

In this field, the Gendarmerie Corps has also distinguished itself for its investigative activity in support of the Office of the Promoter of Justice.

It must be noted that the appreciable reforms introduced over time and which are giving concrete results, remain, however, anchored and dependent on the work of man.

And, in fact, beyond the specifics of the normative materials available to them, those who are called upon to judge, must in any case work according to human criteria, even before legal ones, because justice, as I mentioned before, does not flow so much from the formal perfection of the system and the rules, but from the quality and rectitude of people, first and foremost judges.

We, therefore, require a particular attitude from the operators, not only intellectually, but also morally and deontologically. In this sense, the promotion of justice requires the contribution of the right people.

Jesus’ demanding and strong words can help us here: “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged” (cf. Mt 7:2). The Gospel reminds us that our attempts to earthly justice always have as their ultimate horizon the encounter with divine justice, that of the Lord who awaits us. These words should not frighten us, but rather spur us to do our duty with seriousness and humility.

I would like to conclude by encouraging you to continue in the fulfillment of your vocation and mission essential in the daily effort to establish justice.

Commit yourselves with the awareness of your important responsibilities.

Open up spaces and new paths for the implementation of justice for the promotion of human dignity, of freedom, ultimately, of peace.

I am sure that you will honour this commitment with the Lord who will accompany you on this journey. And I ask you to pray for me too. Thank you.

And let us ask together, before the blessing, for the protection of Our Lady, that as Mother she may help us in this commitment to justice.

Hail Mary .... [Blessing].
Letter to the President of mission for future nuncios

In a letter sent to Archbishop Joseph Marino, President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, Pope Francis launched an initiative to include a year of missionary service as part of the formation programme of future members of the Holy See diplomatic corps. It is hoped that the full year to be spent in mission in particular Churches throughout the world, will be helpful not only to young priests, but also to individual Dioceses of the Universal Church. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s letter.

Dear Brother,

At the conclusion of the work of the recent Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, I expressed my wish that priests preparing for the Holy See diplomatic service dedicate one year of their formation to missionary commitment in a diocese.

I am convinced that such an experience will be helpful to all young men preparing for or beginning their priestly service, but in a particular way, to those who in the future will be called to collaborate with the Pontifical representatives and who may subsequently become Holy See envoys to nations and particular Churches.

Indeed, as I have already had the opportunity to remind the community of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy: “The mission to which you will one day be called to carry out will take you to all parts of the world. Europe is in need of an awakening; Africa is thirsty for reconciliation; Latin America is hungry for nourishment and interoperty; North America is bent on rediscovering the roots of an identity that is not defined by exclusion. Asia and Oceania are challenged by the capacity to ferment in diaspora and to dialogue with the vastness of ancestral cultures” (25 June 2015).

In order to face in a positive way, these growing challenges for the Church and the world, in addition to solid priestly and pastoral formation and the specific training offered by this Academy, future Holy See diplomats will need to gain personal experience of mission outside their diocese of origin, sharing a journey with the missionary Churches and their community, participat-
ing in their daily evangelizing activity.

I therefore turn to you, dear Brother, who recently assumed the office of President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, and ask you to implement this desire of mine to enrich the formation programme with one year dedicated entirely to missionary service in the particular Churches throughout the world. This new experience will come into effect starting with the new students who will begin their formation in the coming 2020/2021 academic year.

In order to develop this project in greater depth and to proceed to a good start, close collaboration will be needed first of all with the Secretariat of State and, more precisely, with the Section for diplomatic staff of the Holy See, and the Pontifical representatives, who will certainly not fail to provide valuable help in identifying the particular Churches ready to welcome the students and will closely follow their experience.

I am certain that, after overcoming any initial concerns that may arise from this new formation style aimed at future Holy See diplomats, the missionary experience being promoted will be helpful not only to young academicians, but also to the individual Churches with whom they will collaborate and, I hope, will inspire in other priests of the universal Church the desire to make themselves available for a period of missionary service outside their own diocese.

In conclusion, entrusting to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, this new way of forming future collaborators of the Holy See diplomatic service, I affectionately send a cordial greeting and my Apostolic Blessing to you, dear Brother, and to the entire community of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, asking you, please, to remember me in your prayers.

From the Vatican, 11 February 2020

Francis

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Ambassadors of a missionary Church

There is no doubt that the decision, now formalized by the Successor of Peter, represents a truly significant change in the course of studies of those who will serve in the Nunciatures and who, in many cases, will be made bishops at a relatively young age. A fundamental piece of the curriculum now becomes the year dedicated to missionary service in the field, far from home, getting one’s hands dirty in pastoral work, in the frontier Churches. A year of change, of fatigue, of new experiences, which will allow a better and deeper understanding of the reality of the Church, of her problems and difficulties, and also of her hopes and the comforting beauty of her daily life. A year that will allow the students of the Ecclesiastical Academy themselves, their superiors and the bishops of their dioceses of origin, to better discern individual vocations. A year that could also dissuade someone from undertaking this service. It will certainly be an experience destined to change the outlook and perspective of those who will one day be called to represent the Pope in various countries, thus underlining the importance for the local Churches of helping the Pope by sending good and capable priests in his service.

Once again, Pope Francis reminds us that the whole Church – diplomatic service included – is either missionary or she is not. She either evangelizes or she is not Church. If the Church is not on the move, she decays, she becomes something else”, as the Pope stated in the important book interview with Gianni Valente, “Without Him We Can Do Nothing”. In this recent publication that deserves to be taken to heart, Pope Francis says: “Mission is not a tried and tested company plan. Neither is it a public spectacle organized to flaunt how many people are associated with it thanks to our marketing. The Holy Spirit works as he wills, when he wills and where he wills... Mission’s mysterious fruitfulness does not consist in our intentions, in our methods, in our impulses and in our initiatives, but rests precisely in this ‘vertigo’: the ‘vertigo’ we perceive when we hear Jesus’ words: ‘Without me you can do nothing’.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Blows that affect the human genome

Carlo Bellini

The Fourth parliament recently approved a bill banning parents from using physical punishment in the upbringing of their children. Fifty-eight countries around the world have so far implemented the smacking ban, albeit with strong opposition. A report by the Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe has shown that physical violence against children is also a widespread practice in many European countries. Alarming new data has emerged that gives real urgency to banning violent parental punishment: blows harm children in their deepest and most sensitive recesses, affecting the human genome itself.

Science of the Total Environment

…the DNA of children reacts, causing sequences in children and alterations particularly violent mothers could ing are stronger in subjects who were known and unpredictable long-term.

In the past 15 years, scientists have emerged that gives real urgency to banning violent parental punishment: blows harm children in their deepest and most sensitive recesses, affecting the human genome itself.

The DNA of children reacts, causing sequences in children and alterations particularly violent mothers could ing are stronger in subjects who were known and unpredictable long-term.

These are the facts. Physical punishment is a form of abuse, which is one of the most common causes of harm to children. It is a form of violence that is not justified or acceptable, and it is a form of abuse that is known to have serious and long-lasting effects on children’s physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Indeed, violence changes the way the twin DNA of children, causing known and unpredictable long-term harm, facts that should be highlighted, in order to share the research published in “Scientific Reports.” The twin DNA of two age groups is strongest in subjects who were exposed to a violent upbringing of their parents. The twin DNA of children is exposed to violence, which is one of the most common causes of harm to children. It is a form of violence that is not justified or acceptable, and it is a form of abuse that is known to have serious and long-lasting effects on children’s physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Children crying at night

ANNA MONGE

During a summer night, I was agitated by the sound of a child crying. The bedroom window was open, and the sound of the crying child was loud and clear. I had just returned from a long day of work, and I was feeling tired and stressed. I then remembered that the child was not the only one who was crying that night. It was the sound of the crying child that forced me to reflect. After a moment, I thought that the problem was the sound of the crying child, not the crying child itself. I then remembered that the problem was the sound of the crying child, not the crying child itself. I then remembered that the problem was the sound of the crying child, not the crying child itself.

The problem, mainly experienced by parents, is probably the same. They cry for the “gift of tears,” but their cry is not. Most parents are unable to see, as it is sad, to cope with it. Perhaps it is, however, to bear in mind that the cry of children, when they are crying, can be a source of despair. No, love cannot be reduced to a mere feeling, to a matter of indifference. Children cry at night, for they are children who communicate by crying, communicate — the voice of children is the voice of the world. The voice of children is the voice of the world. The voice of children is the voice of the world.

Care for infant...
Holy Father to visit Malta on Pentecost Sunday

The Director of the Holy See Press Office Matteo Bruni officially announced on Monday, 17 February, that the Holy Father has accepted the invitation of the President of the Republic of Malta, the Authorities and the Catholic Church of the Country to visit Malta on Sunday, 31 May. The one-day visit will also include a visit to Gozo.

The announcement of Pope Francis’ Visit has been received with enthusiasm by Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, the government and the people.

The theme chosen for the Papal visit is: “they showed us unusual kindness” (Acts 28:2). The logo depicts open hands from a ship reaching out to a Cross, at the mercy of the waves. The hands represent a sign of welcome of the Christian person towards his neighbour and assistance to those who are in difficulty, abandoned to their fate. The boat recalls the dramatic story of the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul together with his companions on the island of Malta (cf. Acts 27:27-44) and the welcome they were given by the people of Malta (cf. Acts 28:1-10).

The programme will be published in due course.

Janis’ cry

Janis is a child who was born from a casual relationship. His mother does not feel like taking care of him, while his father Elroy wanted to take him with him to New Mexico, but now he’s flying on a plane to London, over the Channel, trying not to think about what he has just done.

He is terrified by the miracle of having a child, by the dizzying mystery of that dwarf almost indistinguishable from him, who looks him in the eyes holding a broken crayon in his hand with a guilty air about him.

“...[they] showed us unusual kindness” (Acts 28:2). The logo depicts open hands from a ship reaching out to a Cross, at the mercy of the waves. The hands represent a sign of welcome of the Christian person towards his neighbour and assistance to those who are in difficulty, abandoned to their fate. The boat recalls the dramatic story of the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul together with his companions on the island of Malta (cf. Acts 27:27-44) and the welcome they were given by the people of Malta (cf. Acts 28:1-10).

The programme will be published in due course.

Human genome

Their children’s time to schools and the mass media. Are parents and children living under the same roof as strangers? It is an issue that should not be underestimated because if smacking a child is a sign of a pathological repressed insecurity, showing disinterest is just as harmful.

Making laws in this area is no easy task; Scottish surveys on the new law on physical punishment show lack of support for the banning of a mother’s or father’s spanking as a warning against a potentially dangerous action of their child. Any kind of violence must be banned, but not all smacking is violent and not all violence against minors is only of a physical nature. One can hurt children in many ways. No one can claim a priori that smacking is pedagogically wrong, or that a thorough rebuke or punishment should be banned by law. However, it should not be meted out of sheer anger, but rather to be used as part of educating within the family. Because it is precisely the family that must once again regain its role not by handing over to others the responsibility of the upbringing of their children, as Pope Francis outlined with utmost clarity at the General Audience of Wednesday, 20 May 2015, where he recalled: “It is time for fathers and mothers to return from their exile – for they have exiled themselves from their children’s upbringing – and to fully resume their educational role.”

C.B.
Dear brothers,

I warmly welcome the celebration of the International Conference which brings you together, first in Trent and then in Loppiano, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the Servant of God Chiara Lubich. I hope the aim of exploring further the meaning and contribution of the charism of unity at the service today of the Church’s mission as an evangelizing communion.

Charisms are “gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ and then channelled into an evangelizing impulse” (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, n. 130). It is good then, also for the Bishops, to place themselves once again in the school of the Holy Spirit, who brings them out of the Upper Room – where the Lord Jesus gathered them in unity with Peter and Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church – to walk in the fire of Pentecost with all the People of God along the paths of mission. His light and strength lead them to meet with mercy and tenderness those who live and suffer in the existential and social peripheries, announcing the Good News.

Charisms are made possible by the Holy Spirit, who “unites the Church to the ever-new and current well-spring of Jesus’ Gospel. (Lumen Gentium, n. 12).” The charism of unity is one of these graces for our time, which experiences an epoch change and invokes a simple and radical spiritual and pastoral reform, to restore the Church to its ever-new and current well-spring of Jesus’ Gospel.

Through the charism of unity, fully attuned to the Magisterium of the Vatican Ecumenical Council II, the Holy Spirit teaches us in a tangible way to live the grace of unity according to the prayer addressed by Jesus to the Father on the eve of his Pasch of death and Resurrection (cf. Jn 17:21). The Spirit invites us to choose as one all of our following, and as the only compass of our ministry, Jesus crucified – Chiara Lubich would add “for-saken” (cf. Mt 17:45; Mt 27:48) – making ourselves one with all, starting with the last, the excluded, the discarded, to bring them light, joy and peace. The Spirit opens us to the dialogue of charity and truth with every man and woman, of all cultures, religious traditions and ideal convictions, in order to build up in encounter the new civilization of love. The Spirit puts us in the school of Mary, where we learn that what has value and remains is love. Like Mary, and with her, we are called to make present and almost tangible together, for the humanity of today, Jesus, the Son of God who in her womb became the firstborn among many brothers and sisters (cf. Rom 8:29) and who lives Risen, among those who are one in His name (cf. Mt 18:20).

With you, then, dear brother bishops, I express my gratitude to God for the gift of the charism of unity through the witness and teaching of the Servant of God Chiara Lubich and, with renewed communion and under the maternal gaze of Mary, I “invoke the Holy Spirit. I implore Him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples” (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, n. 261).

I bless each one of you and the communities entrusted to you, and I ask you, please, to pray for me.

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 29 January 2020

Francesco

Letter to bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement

‘A Charism at the service of the Church and humanity’

“The charism of unity” is one of “these graces for our time which ... calls for a simple, radical, spiritual and pastoral reform that brings the Church back to the ever new and relevant source that is the Gospel of Jesus.” The Holy Father emphasized this in his message sent to Bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement, on the occasion of the International Conference promoted and organized to mark the centenary of the birth of the Servant of God Chiara Lubich. The message was read by Cardinal Francis X. Kriengsak Kovithavanij, Archbishop of Bangkok, on Saturday, 8 February.

The Conference was held first in Trento, 8 to 9 February, and then in Loppiano near Florence, 10 to 12 February. The following is a translation of the Pope’s message.

Dears brothers,

the “Focolari” within the historical context of her time, spanning joys, sufferings, victories and dark moments.

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The many events scheduled for her centenary celebrations, will provide an opportunity to become better acquainted with the life and work of Lubich, such as the publishing of a new and important book by Maurizio Gentilini entitled ‘Chiara Lubich. La sua dolcissima ten storia e profeta’ (History and prophet). Chiara Lubich’s way to unity which is currently being translated into English. This book is “both new and important because it places the life of the Foundress of the “Focolari” within the historical context of her time, spanning joys, sufferings, victories and dark moments.

Born one century ago, on 24 January 1920, in Trent, Italy, Chiara Lubich was a woman who was capable of understanding the needs of others and of thinking in a unique way. Never outdated by history, she offered answers through the Work of Mary, a Movement that brings together a myriad of differences such as, race, creed... into total complementarity. In doing all this, Chiara always chose the Gospel as the single principle to which to conform. The many events scheduled for her centenary celebrations, will provide an opportunity to become better acquainted with the life and work of Lubich, such as the publishing of a new and important book by Maurizio Gentilini entitled ‘Chiara Lubich. La sua dolcissima ten storia e profeta’ (History and prophet). Chiara Lubich’s way to unity which is currently being translated into English. This book is “both new and important because it places the life of the Foundress of the “Focolari” within the historical context of her time, spanning joys, sufferings, victories and dark moments.

The charismatic gifts are co-essential, together with the hierarchical gifts, in the mission of the Church, and the Shepherds are invested with the specific gift of recognizing and promoting the action of the Holy Spirit who disseminates amid the People of God, among the faithful of every vocation, “special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church” (Lumen Gentium, n. 12).

The charism of unity is one of these graces for our time, which experiences an epoch change and invokes a simple and radical spiritual and pastoral reform, to restore the Church to the ever-new and current well-spring of Jesus’ Gospel.

Through the charism of unity, fully attuned to the Magisterium of the Vatican Ecumenical Council II, the Holy Spirit teaches us in a tangible way to live the grace of unity according to the prayer addressed by Jesus to the Father on the eve of his Pasch of death and Resurrection (cf. Jn 17:21). The Spirit invites us to choose as one all of our following, and as the only compass of our ministry, Jesus crucified – Chiara Lubich would add “for-saken” (cf. Mt 17:45; Mt 27:48) – making ourselves one with all, starting with the last, the excluded, the discarded, to bring them light, joy and peace. The Spirit opens us to the dialogue of charity and truth with every man and woman, of all cultures, religious traditions and ideal convictions, in order to build up in encounter the new civilization of love. The Spirit puts us in the school of Mary, where we learn that what has value and remains is love. Like Mary, and with her, we are called to make present and almost tangible together, for the humanity of today, Jesus, the Son of God who in her womb became the firstborn among many brothers and sisters (cf. Rom 8:29) and who lives Risen, among those who are one in His name (cf. Mt 18:20).

With you, then, dear brother bishops, I express my gratitude to God for the gift of the charism of unity through the witness and teaching of the Servant of God Chiara Lubich and, with renewed communion and under the maternal gaze of Mary, I “invoke the Holy Spirit. I implore Him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples” (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, n. 261).

I bless each one of you and the communities entrusted to you, and I ask you, please, to pray for me.

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 29 January 2020

Francesco

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The many events scheduled for her centenary celebrations, will provide an opportunity to become better acquainted with the life and work of Lubich, such as the publishing of a new and important book by Maurizio Gentilini entitled ‘Chiara Lubich. La sua dolcissima ten storia e profeta’ (History and prophet). Chiara Lubich’s way to unity which is currently being translated into English. This book is “both new and important because it places the life of the Foundress of the “Focolari” within the historical context of her time, spanning joys, sufferings, victories and dark moments.
Friday, 17 January

Our relationship with God is the essence of life

Asking for forgiveness is the medicine to heal diseases of the soul, Pope Francis told the faithful during his homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Friday, 17 January. Commenting on the miracle of the healing of the paralytic in the Gospel of Mark, he pointed out that before ordering him to stand up, Jesus first addressed a few words to him: “your sins are forgiven”. Jesus focused on the essential because, although he heals, the Pope said, he is a man of God, not a medicine man and although Jesus teaches, he is much more than a teacher.

Pope Francis then offered more examples of Jesus’ essential message such as the episode of the sinful and weeping woman to whom Jesus says the same: “your sins are forgiven”, and the sick man who did not get out of the pool on time to be healed to whom Jesus says: “Do not sin anymore”. Thus, what is essential, the Pope explained, is our relationship with God. “We often forget this as if afraid of an encounter with the Lord”. While we do a lot for our physical health, he added, which is a gift we should preserve, we must also preserve our spiritual health, the health of our hearts. The Pope noted that we grow so accustomed to this medicine of forgiveness that it becomes watered down and loses the strength and power of the prophesy of Jesus. This can result in people not finding any sins to confess due to a “lack of awareness of sins” and of the value of the medicine of forgiveness required to heal these sins. Remembering Jesus’ words to the paralytic today, can help us focus on what is essential, he concluded: Jesus is telling us: “I want to forgive your sins”. This is what he came for and what he gave up his life for.

Monday, 20 January

Trust in God makes us free

During his homily, the Holy Father reflected on the day’s First Reading in which Saul was rejected as King, and on the importance of having a “docile heart”. Saul believed his own strength over God’s will, and Saul believed that he could do what was not the Lord’s will. “When I am obstinate, I kill even with slander,” the Pope said, and one can kill even with slander.

Jealousy, he explained, arises from a conversation with oneself, which leads one to misjudge things in a way that prevents one from seeing reality. When God gives us the grace to see the reality of a situation, he invites us to look at ourselves and “jealousy bursts like a soap bubble”. Jealousy and envy are “seeds of war” that we must watch out for by protecting “our hearts from this illness”. When we feel jealous for someone, he added, we should ask ourselves why. The Holy Father concluded his homily by asking the Lord for the grace of having a transparent, friendly heart that “seeks only justice” and peace.

Tuesday, 21 January

One cannot buy the gifts of the Lord

Taking his cue from the day’s First Reading which narrates David’s election as King of Israel, at the homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday, 21 January, Pope Francis highlighted the free nature of God’s gifts. Out of all the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem, the Lord sends Samuel to anoint David, “the most lim-

ied, the one who had no titles” and who had not even fought in the war. This story, the Pope said, should prompt us to reflect on why the Lord chose a normal boy to be anointed.

This is because the Lord’s gifts are free, he explained. “Being Christian, being baptized, being ordained priests and bishops is pure gratuitousness. You cannot buy the Lord’s gifts”. Christian holiness, he said, means “to preserve the Lord’s gift”. As he compared the gifts of the anointing of David and the anointing of priests and bishops, the Holy Father took the opportunity to criticize the at-

titude of “those who want to go ahead in the so-called eclesiastical careers, who behave in a simoncical way, seeking influences, becoming climbers”, thus being unchristian. To be anointed a bishop is a gift, he stressed. If priests forget our flock, if we bishops forget this and feel more important than others, we deny God’s gift”. He urged Christians to live with humility, guarding God’s gift of having chosen us and warned against forgetting the Word of the Lord. The Holy Father concluded his homily by asking the Lord for the grace to give thanks for the great and beautiful gift he has given us and to preserve it with faith-

fulness.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

with God. “We often forget this as if afraid of an encounter with the Lord”. While we do a lot for our physical health, he added, which is a gift we should preserve, we must also preserve our spiritual health, the health of our hearts. The Pope noted that we grow so accustomed to this medicine of forgiveness that it becomes watered down and loses the strength and power of the prophesy of Jesus. This can result in people not finding any sins to confess due to a “lack of awareness of sins” and of the value of the medicine of forgiveness required to heal these sins. Remembering Jesus’ words to the paralytic today, can help us focus on what is essential, he concluded: Jesus is telling us: “I want to forgive your sins”. This is what he came for and what he gave up his life for.

Tuesday, 28 January

Christians without joy are prisoners of formalities

During his homily at Santa Marta, the Holy Father spoke of the importance of Christian joy as he reflected on the day’s First Reading which narrates the joy of King David and of all the people of Israel at the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. This was the joy at meeting God. The people of Israel felt joyful that God was with them and David expressed his joy by dancing. This, the Pope said was the result of the spiritual joy of encountering the Lord, of his return to his people. We too experience joy, he said, “when we are with the Lord” in our parishes and villages.

However, one of David’s wives reproached him for what she called his vulgar and shameless dancing, a reaction which the Pope described as contempt for “genuine religiosity and spontaneity of joy at being with the Lord. The wife was punished for this and could not bear any children. Without joy in the heart, the Pope said, a Christian is not fruitful.

The Word of God is “not ashamed of celebration” the Pope said. Indeed celebration is not only expressed spiritually but becomes sharing, he said, and gave the example of David who distributed food to the people after the blessing so they could continue to celebrate at home. He concluded his homily by reminding the faithful of the words of Saint Paul VI who, in his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntianda, said that the Gospel does not move forward with boring and bitter evangelizers but rather with joyful evangelizers filled with life.

Thursday, 30 January

God will judge us with the same measure we have for others

During the homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday, 30 January, the Holy Father urged the faithful to relate to others in a Christian way, with generosity and love for
one day we will be judged in the same measure. He was commenting on the passage from the Gospel of Mark in which Jesus says: “the measure you give will be the measure you get”. Because we will be called to account for how we live our lives today, the Pope explained, we need to take stock not only of the bad or the good things we do, but also of our daily lifestyle.

Each of us has a way of measuring ourselves, things and others and this very same measure will be the one the Lord will use with us. Thus, those who judge others with selfishness, will be judged in the same way and those who have no pity and are capable of “trampling on everyone’s head”, will likewise be judged without pity. Christians, however, have a different model and we should ask ourselves whether our parameters are the ones that Jesus asks of us. Jesus “humbled himself unto death. This is the model”, Pope Francis stressed.

The Holy Father then explained that a worldly lifestyle is incapable of following Jesus’ example. Sometimes, he continued, bishops complain to him when they find it difficult to transfer priests to parishes that are “considered of a lower category” because they believe they are being punished. This is because they use a worldly measure to evaluate and judge rather than a Christian one. Pope Francis concluded the homily by inviting the faithful to live compassionate and merciful lives and to ask the Lord for the grace to live in a Christian way, never fearing the cross of humbleness “because this is the path that he has chosen to save us”.

Friday, 31 January

Worldliness is a slow slide into sin

As he reflected on the day’s First Reading in which King David fell into temptation, the Holy Father warned against the sin of worldliness during his homily for Mass at Santa Marta. The Pope noted that David had slipped into a comfortable life which was unperturbed even in the face of the most serious sins. He had forgotten that he had been elected by God. Furthermore, he had chosen to commit murder, killing Uriah for the adultery with his wife Bathsheba, and then continued his normal life quietly and his heart had not moved. The Pope wondered how the great King David who was holy and had done so many good things and who was united with God, could have done that; this took time to happen, David slipped slowly. Indeed, he said, there are sins of the moment, such as uncontrollable anger, and then there are sins that one slips into slowly with the spirit of worldliness. It is the spirit of the world that leads one to do such things as David did, as if they were normal, losing the awareness of sin.

Pope Francis pointed out that this problem of worldliness is not simply a problem of the past and that it exists today too and gave the example of a recent incident in Argentina in which some rugby players killed a young man in a nightlife fight. Sometimes we need “a slap of life” to stop sliding into sin, just like it took the prophet Nathan sent by God to show David his mistake. The story of the fall of King David should make us realize that the same can happen to us, the Pope said, as he invited Christians to think about the spiritual atmosphere of their life. He concluded the homily by asking the Lord to send us a prophet such as a neighbour or a son or parent to “slap” us a little when we find ourselves slipping into an atmosphere where everything appears to be lawful.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jesús Juárez Párraga, SDB, of Sucre, Bolivia (11 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Ricardo Ernesto Centellas Guzmán as Metropolitan Archbishop of Sucre. Until now he has served as Bishop of Potosi, Bolivia (11 Feb.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Luiz Augusto Castro Quinenga, SMt, of Tunja, Colombia (11 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Gabriel Ángel Villa Vahos as Metropolitan Archbishop of Tunja. Until now he has served as Bishop of Ocaña, Colombia (11 Feb.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Venancio Bacitoni of Bururi, Burundi (15 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Salvador Nicolò, as Bishop of Bururi. Until now he has served as secretary of the Episcopal Commission for the Lay Apostolate (15 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Nicolò, 61, was born in Katwensi, Burundi. He was ordained a priest on 9 July 1989.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Bronisław Bernacki of Odessa-Simferopol, Ukraine (18 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Stanisław Szytkoraduk, OFM, as Bishop of Odessa-Simferopol. Until now he has served as coadjutor of the said Diocese (18 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as consulsors to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: Fr Mario Tornolina, professor of spiritual theology; Fr Alberto Royo Mejía, professor of Canon Law, and Sr Mary Melone, Magnificent Rector of the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome (1 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as Under-secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches Fr Flavio Pace, official of the said dicastery (3 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as Under-secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches Fr Flavio Pace, official of the said dicastery (3 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as Under-secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences Mr John Davids, professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, Great Britain (5 Feb.).

On 26 January, Cardinal Sigismond Taconni, SJ, Archbishop emeritus of Kaunas, took possession of the Title of Sant’Angela Merici.


On 8 February, Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, took possession of the Deaconry of San Giovanni Crisostomo a Monte Sacro Alto.

On 16 February, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ, Archbishop emeritus of Luxembourg, took possession of the Title of San Giovanni Crisostomo a Monte Sacro Alto.

On 16 February, Cardinal Cristóbal López Romero, CDB, Archbishop of Rabat, Morocco took possession of the Title of San Leone I.

The Holy Father appointed as consultors to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: Fr Marco Tornolina, professor of spiritual theology; Fr Alberto Royo Mejía, professor of Canon Law, and Sr Mary Melone, Magnificent Rector of the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome (1 Feb.).

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NEUROLOGY

Bishop Eneméssy Angelo Lazzaris, FDS, of Balias, Brazil, at age 71 (2 Feb.).

Bishop William John McNaughton, CM, Bishop emeritus of Incheon, Korea, at age 93 (14 Feb.).

Bishop Peter Iorzaul Adoboh, of Katung-Ah, Nigeria, at age 61 (14 Feb.).
Wars arise from the inability to master one’s passions

The Pontiff recalls the little girl who died due to freezing weather in Syria

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good Morning.

Today’s Gospel reading (cf. Mt 5:17-37) is on the “Sermon on the Mount” and deals with the subject of the fulfilment of the Law: how should I fulfil the Law, how can I do it? Jesus wants to help his listeners take the right approach to the prescriptions of the Commandments given to Moses, urging them to be open to God who teaches us true freedom and responsibility through the Law. It is a matter of living it as an instrument of freedom. Let us not forget this: to live the Law as an instrument of freedom, which helps me to be freer, which helps me not to be a slave to passion and sin. Let us think about war, let us think about the consequences of war, let us think of that little girl who died due to the cold (temperatures), in Syria the day before yesterday. So many calamities, so many. This is the result of passion, and people who wage war do not know how to master their passions. They do not comply with the law. When one gives in to temptation and passion, one is not the master and agent of one’s own life, but rather one becomes incapable of managing it with willingness and responsibility.

Jesus’ discourse is divided into four antitheses, each one expressed by the formula: “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you”. These antitheses refer to as many situations in daily life: murder, adultery, divorce and swearing. Jesus does not abolish the prescriptions concerning these issues, but he explains their full meaning and indicates the spirit in which they must be observed. He encourages us to move away from the formal observance of the Law to substantive observance, accepting the Law in our hearts, which is the centre of the intentions, decisions, words and gestures of each of us. From the heart come good and bad deeds.

By accepting the Law of God in our heart, one understands that, when one does not love one’s neighbour, to some extent one kills oneself and others, because hatred, rivalry and division kill the fraternal charity that is the basis of interpersonal relationships. And this applies to what I have said about war and also about gossip, because words kill. By accepting the Law of God in our heart one understands that desires must be guided, because one cannot obtain everything one desires, and it is not good to give in to selfish and possessive feelings. When one accepts the Law of God in one’s heart, one understands that one must give up a lifestyle of broken promises, as well as move from the prohibition of perjury to the decision not to swear at all, behaving sincerely to everyone.

And Jesus is aware that it is not easy to live the Commandments in such an all-encompassing way. That is why he offers us the help of his love: he came into the world not only to fulfill the Law, but also to give us his grace, so that we can do God’s will, loving him and our brothers and sisters. We can do everything, everything, with the grace of God! Indeed, holiness is none other than guarding God’s freely given grace. It is a matter of trusting and entrusting ourselves to him, to his Grace, to that freedom that he has given us, and welcoming the hand he constantly extends to us, so that our efforts and our necessary commitment can be sustained by his help, overflowing with goodness and mercy.

Today Jesus asks us to continue on the path of love that he has indicated to us and which begins from the heart. This is the path to follow in order to live as Christians. May the Virgin Mary help us to follow the path traced by her Son, to reach true joy and to spread justice and peace everywhere.

After the Angelus, the Pope continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims; in particular, those from Croatia and Serbia; from Trappes, France; from the Diocese of Toledo, Spain; and the students from the “Colegio Asunción Cuestablanca” in Madrid.

I greet the faithful from Biancavilla, Fiumicino, Aprilia, Pescara and Treviso, and the confirmands from Serravalle Scrivia, Quarto d’Altino and Rosolina.

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

"Sermon on the Mount" Cosimo Rosselli (1481-1482)