

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*

Fifty-third year, number 27 (2.654)

Vatican City

Friday, 3 July 2020

The Holy Father celebrates Mass on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

## Unity and Prophecy

On Monday, 29 June, Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis celebrated Mass at the Altar of the Chair in Saint Peter's Basilica, where he blessed the Pallia that will be bestowed upon the 54 Metropolitan Archbishops appointed over the past year. In his homily the Holy Father reflected on the themes of "unity" and "prophecy", observing that the source of unity is prayer while "prophecy is born whenever we allow ourselves to be challenged by God". Due to Covid-19 restrictions, only a small number of faithful attended the Mass, and unlike the previous year, the Pope was unable to personally consign the Pallia, which he symbolically entrusted to Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Dean of the College of Cardinals. In keeping with the practice established years ago to emphasize the bond with the local Churches, the actual imposition of the Pallia will take place at the hand of the Pontifical representative in the prelates' dioceses of origin. The Holy Father paused in prayer before the Basilica's bronze Statue of Saint Peter, which was adorned for the occasion.



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### A mid-year day's reflection Living in between risks and hopes

ANDREA MONDA

The first half of this year 2020 is passing, and perhaps it is a good moment to summarize, to collect our thoughts. It may be that each year, at the end of the month of June, the community of *L'Osservatore Romano* feels this passage particularly, seeing that the first of July 1861 is the date recalled in documents and by historians as the birth of this daily newspaper and thus today too, "aged" 159 years, we feel like stopping the flow of time for a moment in order to look in both directions, backwards and forwards, and try to say something, take stock, indicate a perspective. If nothing else, to express our thanks.

We have arrived at this date and it is not something to be taken for granted, especially in a year such as this, which has already entered history as the year of the coronavirus pandemic. Hence today's reflection will be completely focused, not on the long history of the newspaper — we can postpone this until next year, a more "well-rounded" anniversary — but rather on the shorter but far more intense period of this first semester of the present year. Unfortunately a period harshly marked by the sign of death, or rather, of the dead. Because "death" risks becoming a

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The Holy Father sends a letter to Benedict XVI

### Francis' condolences for the death of Georg Ratzinger

*Upon hearing the news of the death of Benedict XVI's brother, Msgr Georg Ratzinger, on Wednesday, 1 July, the Holy Father sent a letter of condolence to the Pope emeritus. The following is a translation of Pope Francis' words.*



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To His Holiness  
Benedict XVI  
Pope emeritus

You had the sensitivity to be the first to inform me of the news of the death of your beloved brother, Msgr Georg. I wish to renew my deepest sympathy and spiritual closeness to you in this moment of sorrow.

I assure you of my prayers of suffrage for your dear departed one, so that the Lord of life, in his merciful goodness, may welcome him into heaven and grant him the reward that awaits the faithful servants of the Gospel.

I also pray for you, Your Holiness, invoking the Father through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the support of Christian hope and tender divine consolation.

Always united in faith in the Risen Christ, source of hope and peace.

With filial and fraternal devotion

FRANCIS

From the Vatican, 2 July 2020

### Papal events suspended

The Pope's Wednesday General Audiences are suspended for the entire month of July.

# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Friday, 26 June

Cardinal Luis Antonio G. Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Bishop Daniele Libanori, SJ, titular Bishop of Buruni, Auxiliary of the Diocese of Rome

Prof. Andrea Riccardi, Founder of the Sant'Egidio Community

Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions)

Archbishop Jean-Marie Speich, titular Archbishop of Sulci, Apostolic Nuncio to Slovenia, with the office of Apostolic Delegate to Kosovo

Saturday, 27 June

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

Bishop Georg Bätzing of Limburg, Federal Republic of Germany, President of the German Episcopal Conference, with the Secretary General, Fr Hans Langendörfer, SJ

Cardinal Beniamino Stella, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

H.E. Ms Agnès Avognon Adjaho, Ambassador of Benin, on her farewell visit

## ORIENTAL CHURCHES

His Beatitude Cardinal Louis Raphaël Sako, Patriarch of Babylon for Chaldeans, with the consent of the Synod of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church, has separated the Eparchy of Zakho, Iraq, from that of



Amadiyah, to which it had been united on 10 June 2013 (27 June).

The Synod of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church of Babylon for Chaldeans has canonically elected as Bishop of the Eparchy of Zakho, Iraq, Chorbishop Felix (Saeed) Dawood Al Shabi, to which the Holy Father has granted his consent (27 June).

Bishop Dawood Al Shabi, 45, was born in Karmlesh, Iraq. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1998. In 2007 he was appointed a chorbishop. He holds a degree in theology, and a licence in canon law.

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Luis Armando Tinco Rivera from his office as Bishop of Carora, Venezuela (23 June).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, from his office as Metropolitan Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, Philippines (23 June).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop José A. Cabantan as Metropolitan Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro. Until now he has served as Bishop of Malaybalay (23 June).

Archbishop Cabantan, 63, was born in Lagonglong, Philippines. He was ordained a priest on 30 April 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 30 April 2010, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Malaybalay.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Philip Lasap Za

Hawng from his office as Bishop of Lashio, Myanmar (24 June).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Lucas Jemphaung Dau Ze, SDB, as Bishop of Lashio. Until now he has served as Coadjutor of the said diocese (24 June).

Bishop Jemphaung Dau Ze, 57, was born in Hpa-Hping, Myanmar. A member of the Society of Don Bosco, he was ordained a priest on 21 April 1996. He was ordained a bishop on 29 January 2020, subsequent to his appointment as coadjutor Bishop of Lashio.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jean-Claude Boulanger from his office as Bishop of Bayeux, France (27 June).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Guadalupe Antonio Ruiz Urquín as Bishop Prelate of the Territorial Prelature of Huautla, Mexico. Until now he has served as head of permanent formation of the clergy of this archdiocese (27 June).

Bishop-elect Ruiz Urquín, 49, was born in Tapilula, Mexico. He was ordained a priest on 19 March 1997. He holds a doctorate in theology.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Gregory Charles Bennet as Bishop of Sale, Australia. Until now he has served as parish priest of Saint Joseph's, Melbourne, Australia (27 June).

Bishop-elect Bennet, 57, was born in Melbourne, Australia. He was ordained a priest in 1992. He studied pastoral counseling and holds a licence in spirituality.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Francesco Massara of Camerino-San Severino Marche as Bishop of Fabriano-Matelica, Italy, joining the two Sees in *persona Episcopi* (27 June).

Archbishop Massara, 54, was born in Tropea, Italy. He was ordained a priest 17 April 1993. He was ordained an archbishop on 6 October 2018, subsequent to his appointment as Archbishop of Camerino-San Severino Marche.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Paul Eusebius Mea Kaiuea, MSC, from his office as Bishop of Tarawa and Nauru, Kiribati and Nauru (29 June).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Koru Tito as Bishop of Tarawa and Nauru. Until now he has served as vicar general of the said Diocese (29 June).

Bishop-elect Tito, 59, was born in Tabiteuea, Kiribati. He was ordained a priest on 20 June 1987. He holds a diploma in education, a doctorate in theology with a specialization in spirituality.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Louis Nzala Kianza from his office as Bishop of Popokabaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo (29 June).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Bernard Marie Fansaka Biniamina as Bishop of Popokabaka. Until now he has served as resident formator at the Saint Augustin interdiocesan seminary of philosophy in Kalonda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (29 June).

Bishop-elect Fansaka Biniamina, 61, was born in Misay, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was ordained a priest on 21 February 1988. He studied philosophy and theology and holds a doctorate in Biblical theology.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Martin Hayes as Bishop of Kilmore, Ireland. Until now he has served as director of pastoral planning and development in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly (29 June).

Bishop-elect Hayes, 60, was born in Two-Miles-Borris, Ireland. He was ordained a priest on 10 June 1989. He holds a BS in Manufacturing Technology; he completed his studies in philosophy and theology and obtained a licence in philosophy.

The Holy Father appointed Fr John Saw Gawdy as coadjutor Bishop of Taungngu, Myanmar. Until now he has served as lecturer in the Saint John Vianney interdiocesan Major Seminary in Loikaw (29 June).

Bishop-elect Saw Gawdy, 64, was born in the village of Domapholi, Myanmar. He was ordained a priest on 9 April 1983. He belongs to the Kayan ethnic group, and to the Gheba tribe. He holds a degree in biblical theology.

The Holy Father appointed as auxiliaries of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo the following:

— Fr Jean-Crispin Kimbeni Ki Kanda, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Dragonara. Until now he has served as official of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and parish administrator of Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo (29 June).

Bishop-elect Kimbeni Ki Kanda, 50, was born in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was ordained a priest on 30 May

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Extraordinary Commissioner appointed

Following the recent promulgation of the Motu Proprio "On transparency, control and competition in the procedures for awarding public contracts of the Holy See and Vatican City State", the Holy Father, on 29 June, appointed Archbishop Mario Giordana, Apostolic Nuncio, as Extraordinary Commissioner for the Fabric of Saint Peter, entrusting him with the task of updating the Statutes, clarifying the administration and reorganizing the administrative and technical offices of the Fabric. A commission will also assist in this delicate task.

This decision also follows a report from the offices of the Auditor General, which led to, on 30 June, the acquisition of documents and electronic equipment at the technical and administrative offices of the Fabric of Saint Peter. This latter operation was authorized by decree of the Promoter of Justice of the Tribunal, Gian Piero Milano, and the deputy, Alessandro Diddi, after informing the Secretariat of State.

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Pope Francis' Message to Members of the Catholic Press Association

## Catholic media united to overcome racism and injustice

*In a message sent on Tuesday, 30 June, to the Catholic Media Conference sponsored by the Catholic Press Association, the Holy Father calls for a commitment "to overcome the diseases of racism, injustice and indifference that disfigure the face of our common family". The following is the English text of the Holy Father's message.*

To the Members of the Catholic Press Association

This year, for the first time in its history, the Catholic Press Association is hosting a virtual Catholic Media Conference, due to the current health situation. Before all else, I would like to express my closeness to those who have been affected by the virus and to those who, even at the risk of their lives, have worked and continue to work in assisting our brothers and sisters in need.

The theme you have chosen for this year's Conference – *Together While Apart* – eloquently expresses the sense of togetherness that emerged, paradoxically, from the experience of social distancing imposed by the pandemic. In my Message for last year's World Communications Day, I reflected on how communication enables us to be, as Saint Paul says, "members of one another" (cf. *Eph* 4:25), called to live in communion within an ever expanding network of relationships. Because of the pandemic, all of us have come to appreciate this truth more fully. Indeed, the experience of these past months has shown how essential is the mission of the communications media for bringing people together, shortening distances, providing necessary in-

formation, and opening minds and hearts to truth.

It was precisely this realization that led to the establishment of the first Catholic newspapers in your country and the constant encouragement given them by the Church's pastors. We see this in the case of the *Charleston Catholic Miscellany*, launched in 1822 by Bishop John England and followed by so many other newspapers and journals. Today, as much as ever, our communities [...] count on newspapers, radio, TV and social media to share, to communicate, to inform and to unite.

*E pluribus unum* – the ideal of unity amid diversity, reflected in the motto of the United States, must also inspire the service you offer to the common good. How urgently is this needed today, in an age marked by conflicts and polarization from which the Catholic community itself is not immune. We need media capable of

building bridges, defending life and breaking down the walls, visible and invisible, that prevent sincere dialogue and truthful communication between individuals and communities. We need media that can help people, especially the young, to distinguish good from evil, to develop sound judgments based on a clear and unbiased presentation of the facts, and to understand the importance of working for justice, social concord and respect for our common home. We need men and women of conviction who protect communication from all that would distort it or bend it to other purposes.

I ask you, then, to be united and a sign of unity among yourselves. Media can be large or small, but in the Church these are not the categories that count. In the Church we have all been baptized in the one Spirit and made members of the one body (cf. *1*

*Cor* 12:13). As in every body, it is often the members who are smallest who, in the end, are those most necessary. So it is with the body of Christ. Each of us, wherever we find ourselves, is called to contribute, through our profession of truth in love, to the Church's growth to full maturity in Christ (cf. *Eph* 4:15).

Communication, we know, is not merely a matter of professional competence. A true communicator dedicates himself or herself completely to the welfare of the others, at every level, from the life of each individual to the life of the entire human family. We cannot truly communicate unless we become personally involved, unless we can personally attest to the truth of the message we convey. All communication has its ultimate source in the life of the triune God, who shares with us the richness of his divine life and calls us in turn to communicate that treasure to others by our unity in the service of his truth.

Dear friends, I cordially invoke upon you and the work of your Conference an outpouring of the Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding and good counsel. Only the gaze of the Spirit allows us not to close our eyes to those who suffer and to seek the true good of all. Only with that gaze can we effectively work to overcome the diseases of racism, injustice and indifference that disfigure the face of our common family. Through your dedication and daily work, may you help others to contemplate situations and people with the eyes of the Spirit. Where our world all too readily speaks with adjectives and adverbs, may Christian communicators speak with nouns that acknowledge and advance the quiet claims of truth and promote human dignity. Where the world sees conflicts and divisions, may you look to the suffering and the poor, and give voice to the plea of our brothers and sisters in need of mercy and understanding.

Yesterday the Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul. May the spirit of communion with the Bishop of Rome, which has always been a hallmark of the Catholic press in your countries, keep all of you united in faith and resistant to fleeting cultural fads that lack the fragrance of evangelical truth. Let us continue to pray together for reconciliation and peace in our world. I assure you of my support and my prayers for you and your families. And I ask you, please, to remember me in your own prayers.

From the Vatican, 30 June 2020

*Franciscus*



### VATICAN BULLETIN

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1999. He holds a degree in bioethics and a doctorate in health pastoral theology.

– Fr Vincent Tshomba Shamba Kotsho, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Oescus. Until now he has served as parish priest of Saint Albert le Grand, diocesan chaplain of Justice and Peace, member of the presbyteral council (29 June).

Bishop-elect Tshomba Shamba Kotsho, 57, was born in Kinshasa. He was ordained a priest on 1 August 1990. He completed his studies in philosophy and theology.

– Fr Charles Ndaka Salabisala, assigning him the titular episcopal

See of Liberalia. Until now he has served as rector of the Major Theological Seminary of Kikwit (29 June).

Bishop-elect Ndaka Salabisala, 47, was born in Popokabaka. He was ordained a priest on 9 September 2001. He holds a doctorate in dogmatic theology and a degree in psychology.

#### APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Grzegorz Ryś, Metropolitan Archbishop of Łódź, Poland, as Apostolic Administrator *sede plena* of the Diocese of Kalisz, Poland (25 June).

#### APOSTOLIC VISITATOR

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jean Teyrouz from the office of Apostolic Visitor for Armenian faithful resident in Western Europe (27 June).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Elie Yéghian of the Eparchy of Sainte-Croix-de-Paris, France, as Apostolic Visitor for Armenian faithful resident in Western Europe (27 June).

#### NECROLOGY

Archbishop Jesús Armamento Dosado, CM, Archbishop emeritus of Ozamiz, Philippines, at age 80 (23 June)

## Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

The Holy Father celebrates Mass on the Solemnity of Rome's Patron Saints

# Unity and Prophecy

*The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles.*

On the feast of the two Apostles of this City, I would like to share with you two key words: unity and prophecy.

**Unity.** We celebrate together two very different individuals: Peter, a fisherman who spent his days amid boats and nets, and Paul, a learned Pharisee who taught in synagogues. When they went forth on mission, Peter spoke to Jews, and Paul to pagans. And when their paths crossed, they could argue heatedly, as Paul is unashamed to admit in one of his letters (cf. *Gal* 2:11). In short, they were two very different people, yet they saw one another as brothers, as happens in close-knit families where there may be frequent arguments but unflinching love. Yet the closeness that joined Peter and Paul did not come from natural inclinations, but from the Lord. He did not command us to like one another, but to love one another. He is the one who unites us, without making us all alike. He unites us in our differences.

Today's first reading brings us to the source of this unity. It relates how the newly born Church was experiencing a moment of crisis: Herod was furious, a violent persecution had broken out, and the Apostle James had been killed. And now Peter had been arrested. The community seemed headless, everyone

fearing for his life. Yet at that tragic moment no one ran away, no one thought about saving his own skin, no one abandoned the others, but all joined in prayer. From prayer they drew strength, from prayer came a unity more powerful than any threat. The text says that, "while Peter was kept in prison, the Church prayed fervently to God for him" (*Acts* 12:5). Unity is the fruit of prayer, for prayer allows the Holy Spirit to intervene, opening our hearts to hope, shortening distances and holding us together at times of difficulty.

Let us notice something else: at that dramatic moment, no one complained about Herod's evil and his persecution. No one abused Herod – and we are so accustomed to abuse those who are in charge. It is pointless, even tedious, for Christians to waste their time complaining about the world, about society, about everything that is not right. Complaints change nothing. Let us remember that complaining is the second door that closes us off from the Holy Spirit, as I said on Pentecost Sunday. The first is narcissism, the second discouragement, the third pessimism. Narcissism makes you look at yourself constantly in a mirror; discouragement leads to complaining and pessimism to thinking everything is dark and bleak. These three attitudes close the door to the Holy Spirit. Those Christians did not cast blame; rather, they prayed. In that community, no one said: "If Peter had been more careful, he would not be in this situation". No one. Humanly speaking, there were reasons to criticize Peter, but no one criticized him. They did not complain about Peter; they prayed for him. They did not talk about Peter behind his back; they talked to God. We today can ask: "Are we protecting our unity, our unity in the Church, with prayer? Are we praying for one another?" What would happen if we prayed more and complained less, if we had a more tranquil tongue? The same thing that happened to Peter in prison: now as then, so many closed doors would be opened, so many chains that bind would be broken. We would be amazed, like the maid who saw Peter at the gate and did not open it, but ran inside, astonished by the joy of seeing Peter (cf. *Acts* 12:10-17). Let us ask for the grace to be able to pray for one another. Saint Paul urged Christians to pray for everyone, especially those who govern (cf. *1 Tim*

2:1-3). "But this governor is...", and there are many adjectives. I will not mention them, because this is neither the time nor the place to mention adjectives that we hear directed against those who govern. Let God judge them; let us pray for those who govern! Let us pray: for they need prayer. This is a task that the Lord has entrusted to us. Are we carrying it out? Or do we simply talk, abuse and do nothing? God expects that when we pray we will also be mindful of those who do not think as we do, those who have slammed the door in our face, those whom we find it hard to forgive. Only prayer unlocks chains, as it did for Peter; only prayer paves the way to unity.

Today we bless the pallia to be bestowed on the Dean of the College of Cardinals and the Metropolitan Archbishops named in the last year. The pallium is a sign of the unity between the sheep and the Shepherd who, like Jesus, carries the sheep on his shoulders, so as never to be separated from it. Today too, in accordance with a fine tradition, we are united in a particular way with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Peter and Andrew were brothers, and, whenever possible, we exchange fraternal visits on our respective feast days. We do so not only out of courtesy, but as a means of journeying together towards the goal that the Lord points out to us: that of full unity. We could not do so today because of the difficulty of travel due to the coronavirus, but when I went to venerate the remains of Peter, in my heart I felt my beloved brother Bartholomew. They are here, with us.

The second word is *prophecy*. *Unity and prophecy*. The Apostles were challenged by Jesus. Peter heard Jesus' question: "Who do you say I am?" (cf. *Mt* 16:15). At that moment he realized that the Lord was not interested in what others thought, but in Peter's personal decision to follow him. Paul's life changed after a similar challenge from Jesus: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (*Acts* 9:4). The Lord shook Paul to the core: more than just knocking him to the ground on the road to Damascus, he shattered Paul's illusion of being respectfully religious. As a result, the proud Saul turned into Paul, a name that means "small". These challenges and reversals are followed by prophecies: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (*Mt* 16:18); and, for Paul: "He is a chosen



instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (*Acts* 9:15). Prophecy is born whenever we allow ourselves to be challenged by God, not when we are concerned to keep everything quiet and under control. Prophecy is not born from my thoughts, from my closed heart. It is born if we allow ourselves to be challenged by God. When the Gospel overturns certainties, prophecy arises. Only someone who is open to God's surprises can become a prophet. And there they are: Peter and Paul, prophets who look to the future. Peter is the first to proclaim that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (*Mt* 16:16). Paul, who considers his impending death: "From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will award to me" (*2 Tim* 4:8).

Today we need prophecy, but real prophecy: not fast talkers who promise the impossible, but testimonies that the Gospel is possible. What is needed are not miraculous shows. It makes me sad when I hear someone say, "We want a prophetic Church". All right. But what are you doing, so that the Church can be prophetic? We need lives that show the miracle of God's love. Not forcefulness, but forthrightness. Not palaver, but prayer. Not speeches, but service. Do you want a prophetic Church? Then start serving and be quiet. Not theory, but testimony. We are not to become rich, but rather to love the poor. We are not to save up for ourselves, but to spend ourselves for others. To seek not the approval of this world, of being comfortable with everyone – here

we say: "being comfortable with God and the devil", being comfortable with everyone –; no, this is not prophecy. We need the joy of the world to come. Not better pastoral plans that seem to have their own self-contained efficiency, as if they were sacraments; efficient pastoral plans, no. We need pastors who offer their lives: *lovers of God*. That is how Peter and Paul preached Jesus, as men in love with God. At his crucifixion, Peter did not think about himself but about his Lord, and, considering himself unworthy of dying like Jesus, asked to be crucified upside down. Before his beheading, Paul thought only of offering his life; he wrote that he wanted to be "poured out like a libation" (*2 Tim* 4:6). That was prophecy. Not words. That was prophecy, the prophecy that changed history.

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus prophesied to Peter: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church". There is a similar prophecy for us too. It is found in the last book of the Bible, where Jesus promises his faithful witnesses "a white stone, on which a new name is written" (*Rev* 2:17). Just as the Lord turned Simon into Peter, so he is calling each one of us, in order to make us living stones with which to build a renewed Church and a renewed humanity. There are always those who destroy unity and stifle prophecy, yet the Lord believes in us and he asks you: "Do you want to be a builder of unity? Do you want to be a prophet of my heaven on earth?" Brothers and sisters, let us be challenged by Jesus, and find the courage to say to him: "Yes, I do!"

## Dignity for all in Rome

At the Angelus, the Pope spiritually 'embraces' Patriarch Bartholomew

*May every person in Rome "live with dignity" and "encounter the joyful witness of the Gospel". This was Pope Francis' wish expressed after the recitation of the Angelus on Monday, 29 June, Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Rome's two Patron Saints. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which he delivered in Italian from the window of the Apostolic Palace overlooking Saint Peter's Square.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Today we celebrate the patron saints of Rome, the Apostles Peter and Paul. And it is a gift to find ourselves praying here, near the place where Peter died a martyr and is buried. However, today's liturgy recalls an entirely different episode: it tells us that several years earlier Peter was freed from death. He had been arrested, he was in prison, and fearing for his life, the Church prayed unceasingly for him. Then an angel came down to free him from prison (cf. *Acts* 12:1-11). But years later, too, when Peter was a prisoner in Rome, the Church would certainly have prayed. On that occasion, however, his life was not spared. Why was he first spared the trial, and then not?

Because there is a path in Peter's life that can illuminate the path of our own. The Lord granted him many graces and freed him from evil: he does this with us too. Indeed, often we go to him only in moments of need, to ask for help. But God sees farther and invites us to go further, to seek not only his gifts, but to seek him, who is the Lord of all gifts; to entrust to him not only our problems, but to entrust our life to him. In this way he can finally give us the greatest grace, that of *giving our life*. Yes, giving our life. The most important thing in life is to make a gift of one's life. And this is true for everyone: for parents to their children and for children to their elderly parents. And here many elderly people come to mind, who have been left alone by their family, as if – I dare say – as if they were material to be discarded. And this is a tragedy of our times: the loneliness of the elderly. The life of children and grandchildren is not given as a gift to the elderly. Offering the gift of ourselves; those who are married and those who are consecrated: it applies everywhere, at home and at work, and to whomever is close to us. God wishes to make us grow in giving; only in this way can we become great. We grow if we give ourselves to others. Let us look at Saint Peter: he did not become a hero because he was freed from prison, but because he gave his life here. His gift transformed a place of execution into the beautiful place of hope in which we find ourselves.

Here is what to ask of God: not only the *grace of the moment*, but the

*grace of life*. Today's Gospel passage shows us the very dialogue that changes Peter's life. He hears Jesus ask him: "Who do you say I am?". And he answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". And Jesus continues, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah" (*Mt* 16:16-17). Jesus calls him "blessed", that is, literally, *happy*. You are happy for having said this. Let us take note: Jesus says *You are blessed* to Peter, who had said to Him, "You are the living God". What, then, is the secret of a blessed life; what is the secret of a happy life? Recognizing Jesus, but Jesus as the *living* God, not as a statue. Because it is not important to know that Jesus was great in history; it is not so important to appreciate what he said or did; what matters is the place I give him in my life, the place I give to Jesus in my heart. It is at that point that Simon hears Jesus say: "you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (*v. 18*). He was not called "rock", because he was a solid and trustworthy man. No, he will make many mistakes afterwards; he was not so reliable, he will make many mistakes; he will even reach the point of denying the Master. But he chose to *build his life on Jesus*, the rock; not – as the text says – "on flesh and blood", that is, on himself, on his abilities, but on Jesus (cf. *v. 17*), who is the rock. Jesus is the *bedrock* upon which *Simon became rock*. We can say the same of the Apostle Paul, who gave himself completely to the Gospel, considering everything else to be worthless, so as to earn Christ.

Today, before the Apostles, we can ask ourselves: "And I, how do I arrange my life? Do I think only of

the needs of the moment or do I believe that my true need is Jesus, who makes a gift of me? And how do I build life, on my abilities or on the living God?". May Our Lady, who entrusted everything to God, help us to place him at the foundation of every day, and may she intercede for us so that, with the grace of God, we may make a gift of our life.

*After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:*

Dear brothers and sisters, I first greet all the people of Rome and those who live in this City, on the feast of its Patron Saints, the Apostles Peter and Paul. By their intercession, I pray that every person in Rome may live with dignity and may encounter the joyful witness of the Gospel.

On this occasion it is traditional for a delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to come to Rome, but this year it is not possible due to the pandemic. Therefore, I spiritually embrace my dear brother, Patriarch Bartholomew, in the hope that our reciprocal visits may resume as soon as possible.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, I would like to remember the many martyrs who have been decapitated, burned alive and killed, especially in the time of the Emperor Nero, on this very land where you are now. This is the bloodstained land of our Christian brothers and sisters. Tomorrow we will commemorate them.

I greet you, dear pilgrims present here: I see flags from Canada, Venezuela, Colombia and others... Many greetings! May your visit to the Tombs of the Apostles strengthen your faith and your witness.

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





# Living in between risks and hopes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"topic" to talk about, since "we die", but the dead, complete with names and faces, are another thing: they are people; they are stories. More than 30,000 people have died in Italy since the start of the pandemic and there is great fear of a return, a "rebound" of the contagion. One of the most terrible aspects among all those tied to Covid-19, is what has been said and often repeated in these weeks, that these people almost always died alone, abandoned for reasons of "safety". Death, which is already the utmost experience of solitude, experienced in absolute hermetic, aseptic isolation; the body, notably absent. This is perhaps everyone's greatest suffering, before which it is difficult to find words, to the point of seeming almost senseless. Two other aspects of this particular pandemic – which sadly is not so "particular" seeing that human history can be read as a sequence of more or less devastating epidemics and plagues, and as the reaction that mankind has been able to organize in the course of recent millennia, undoubtedly making great progress – deserve room for a useful pause to reflect.

## *An asymptomatic sickness*

The first aspect relates to the fact that Covid-19 often manifests the characteristic of an asymptomatic nature. It manifests as a-symptomatic, that is, it manifests by not manifesting itself. It is a treacherous, underhanded virus that insinuates itself into the organism (in the individual person and thus in the entire society) without giving signs, without anyone realizing it, through the sick person who feels fine, who thinks he is fine but in reality is sick. It is an interesting aspect if we apply it to the moral and psychological dimension. In the Bible we read that the evil one is a spirit who acts above all by deceiving, using falsehood as a weapon. That is, he makes it so the person no longer calls things by their name, but ends up calling what is bad "good", and vice versa. Like a

gradual inclined plane that leads to the numbness of that "sensor" which is the conscience, so that we no longer perceive its signal and we no longer react to its "symptoms".

Thus, evil often presents itself without symptoms. It convinces us it is necessary to do something because in reality it leads us to good (our own). In the Gospel, Jesus often clashes with the mentality of those who believe they are okay, in the right, of those who have reached a level that is so dramatically "asymptomatic" that the only possible cure is a good shaking down to their roots. And then to awaken them from "numbness", he uses even harsh and bitter words like "hypocrites, whitewashed tombs, blind guides..."

Pope Francis has often preached in this sense, distinguishing between the sinner and the corrupt: the former still has an active "sense" of sin, feels remorse for the ill he has done – for him, the sickness is still symptomatic. Not so for the corrupt. The latter has shut off, cut sensitive nerves, no longer feels anything and is convinced he does good, that he practically corresponds to good itself. A quote by the English writer C.S. Lewis comes to mind: "It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. They may be more likely to go to Heaven yet at the same time likelier to make a Hell of earth".

Paradoxically this asymptomatic virus has developed a converse effect. That is, it has revealed a situation that had already been confirmed and consolidated for years; it made us realize that, as the Pope has said, we were already sick but were unaware of it. In the evening of 27 March, alone in Saint Peter's Square, Francis said it clearly: our world was already sick. Injustice, inequality, abuse and waste, the deliri-

um of the omnipotence of science and technology were evils that were already present in contemporary society, a society in which the great isolation of people, especially of those most socially fragile, was the predominant figure. By forcing us into merciless and painful isolation, Covid-19 simply exposed and brought out the real virus that grips – not since 2020 but always – the heart of mankind: the selfishness of those who live only "to hold onto their own life" rather than offer it for others. The asymptomatic sickness of this virus was the great symptom that stopped for a little while (and let us hope that this break continues and is fruitful) the mad rush to well-being in place of being, a forced well-being, precisely of those who kept telling themselves that "everything is fine, I'm fine" without realizing what they were saying.

## *The vaccine that isn't*

A second aspect of this pandemic that deserves rethinking is the fact that there is no vaccine for this virus. Not in the sense that it will not be found, this is the hope to which all people address their prayers, regardless of their own personal journey of faith. We don't know if a vaccine will be found, hence the prayers: maybe it will be like the one for the flu that we have to do over every year, but which never completely and with certainty eradicates the effects of the disease; or perhaps it will be like HIV for which years later there is still no vaccine but which in some way has been contained and channeled toward becoming a "chronic" illness. These two examples lead to a reflection. The vaccine we imagine, that drug that comes along and radically and permanently destroys the disease, does not exist, cannot exist. For reasons that were disclosed earlier: the real virus is not Covid-19 but selfishness, the desperate desire to have, which supplants the sense of gratitude for being. Against this more profound virus, no drug exists that magically destroys the contagion once and for all. Jesus spoke about it clearly, for

example, in the parable of the weeds among the wheat. We are all like those zealous servants who are surprised to the point of indignation by the presence of the weeds (of evil) in the field (in the world) and we would like to go there with a hatchet and spade to uproot it all at once, with a sharp and definitive cut. This is not God's logic. The realistic logic of the One who created and loves the reality of the world and of mankind is that of having and giving hope. God is not a magician who resolves the problems and the evil in the world with the wave of a magic wand. Good and evil are mixed together in the "field" of history which is a battlefield, filled with the wounded (this is where the Church's task comes from, being a hospital always open to those who suffer) and the war is open until the last day. Every now and then people promise the coming of paradise in history. They point out to us the evil to be eradicated and they convince us that that "cut" will be the end of the presence of evil in the world. All the paradises promised on this earth have then revealed infernal faces, not only the political ones, borne of the great totalitarian ideologies, but also the lesser ones, like the "artificial" paradises of drugs, not to mention the "financial" ones, kingdoms of indifference and injustice. All asymptomatic "places": the drug addict and the corrupt pursue their good and call things by the wrong name, having completely lost contact with the symptoms of the disease that envelops them.

After all, it is like our computers. Every now and then, they are attacked by viruses. At that point we call the technician who does not destroy or replace our computer, but installs the antivirus for us, making the illness – or, better yet, the conflict – "chronic". The virus and antivirus must fight an everlasting battle to the end of days; for this reason too it is important to "update" the antivirus every so often. And even more importantly, at the end of every operation, to "save" the file we have created. At the Angelus, the Pope spiritually 'embraces' Patriarch Bartholomew. The exquisitely religious language that surrounds our computerized and digital world reveals a deeper meaning. Life is not a magic trick, but an honest, true, unvarnished game, which we must conduct seriously and tenaciously, always starting over from the beginning. In this battlefield that is life, a Christian is not alone. We have a powerful "antivirus" that is Jesus himself, present even now thanks to the unceasing work of the Holy Spirit and to the presence of the Church and therefore of the sacraments. From this vantage point Jesus is both the technician who installs the antivirus and the antivirus itself, who, within us – let us think of the Eucharist, for example – supports us on the daily adventure of life.

These are simple reflections at the end of the first semester of this year, reconsidered with a spirit of gratitude and hope, and in this spirit offered to the reader of this newspaper that today marks 159 years of life.

The Bavarian prelate received his last visit from Benedict XVI at his home in Regensburg

## Georg Ratzinger, brother of the Pope emeritus, dies

Georg Ratzinger, elder brother of the Pope emeritus, has died at the age of 96. He passed away in Regensburg, the city where he lived most of his life. With his death, Joseph Ratzinger, who on 18 June travelled by air to visit his dying brother, has lost the last remaining member of his family. The two brothers – one a musician and conductor of a famous choir, the other a theologian, then bishop, cardinal and Pope – were extremely close, and even became priests on the same day.

Georg Ratzinger was born in Pleiskirchen, Germany on 15 January 1924. He began playing the organ in his parish church as a boy of 11. He entered the seminary in 1935, but was enrolled in the Reich Labour Service in 1942, and then in the Wehrmacht, the armed forces of Nazi Germany, even fighting in Italy. He was captured by the Allies in March 1945 and was a prisoner in Naples for several months before being released and able to return to his family.

He was joined by his brother Joseph when he entered the seminary again in 1947, and together the

two brothers, and some 40 others, were ordained priests on 29 June 1951. After serving as choir master in Traunstein, he directed the Regensburger Domspatzen choir at Regensburg Cathedral for 30 years (1964-1994). He travelled the world playing numerous concerts and directed many etchings for important music labels, including productions dedicated to Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn and other composers.

On 22 August 2008, the mayor of Castel Gandolfo granted Georg honorary citizenship, at which occasion Benedict XVI said of his brother: "From the beginning of my life my brother has always been for me not only a companion, but also a trustworthy guide. For me he has been a point of orientation and of reference with the clarity and determination of his decisions. He has always shown me the path to take, even in difficult situations".

"My brother and I" – Georg Ratzinger said in an interview 11 years ago – "were both altar boys, we both

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A.M.

Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

## Euthanasia remains an inadmissible act

*The following is the translation of a letter by the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addressed to Br René Stockman, Superior General of the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity, on the practice of euthanasia in psychiatric hospitals of the Congregation's Belgian branch.*

Most Reverend Br René, Superior General,

In March 2017, on the website of the Belgian branch of the Congregation of the "Brothers of Charity", a document was published which permits – under certain conditions – the practice of euthanasia in a Catholic hospital. This practice, supported by the Association *Provincialat des Frères de la Charité asbl*, is fundamentally based on three criteria: the inviolability of life, the autonomy of the patient and the relationship of care. Such a document, however, makes no reference either to God, or to Sacred Scripture, or to the Christian vision of humanity.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote to the Superior General, who had already disapproved of this document, asking for clarifications, and the then-prefect of the Dicastery informed the Holy Father about the gravity of the case in an audience on 20 May 2017.

From 27 June 2017 until now, contacts and meetings have taken place between the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Secretariat of State, Representatives of the *Frères* and of the Association *Provincialat des Frères*, as well as representatives of the Episcopal Conference of Belgium, in order to offer opportunities and spaces for dialogue on an extremely delicate subject and thus to find, in a spirit of sincere ecclesiality, a convergence on Catholic doctrine on the subject.

The numerous interdicasterial meetings of 31 August and 7 Novem-

ber 2017, of 1 February, 15 March, 20 June and 12 October 2018, and of 20 July 2019, this Dicastery's letter to the Superior General of the *Frères* dated 30 June 2017, the document *Principles to be observed on the accompaniment of patients in psychiatric hospitals*, and the meeting which took place in Rome on 21 March 2018 should all be recalled.

In this context, the Secretary of State and the Prefects of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life asked the Representatives of the *Frères* and of the Association *Provincialat des Frères* to unequivocally affirm in writing their adherence to the principles of the sacredness of human life and the unacceptability of euthanasia, and, as a result, their absolute refusal to carry it out in the institutions dependent on them. Unfortunately, the replies received gave no assurances on these points.

Euthanasia remains an inadmissible act, even in extreme cases, inasmuch as it "is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. This doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written word of God, is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium" (JOHN PAUL II, *Evangelium Vitae*, n. 65).

For his part, Pope Francis has affirmed that "the current socio-cultural context is progressively eroding the awareness of what makes human life precious. Indeed, it is increasingly valued in terms of its efficiency and utility, to the point of considering lives that do not correspond to this criterion as 'rejected' or 'unworthy'". In this situation of the loss of authentic values, the inalienable duties of human and Christian solidarity and fraternity also fail. In reality, a society deserves to be re-

cognized as 'civil' if it develops antibodies against the throwaway culture; if it recognizes the intangible value of human life; if solidarity is actively practiced and safeguarded as the foundation of coexistence" (POPE FRANCIS, *Address to participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, 30 January 2020).

Furthermore, he reiterated that "the relational – and not merely clinical – approach to the patient,



considered in the uniqueness and integrity of his person, imposes the duty never to abandon anyone in the presence of incurable diseases. Human life, because of its eternal aim, preserves all its value and all its dignity in any condition, even of precariousness and fragility, and as such is always worthy of the highest consideration" (*ibid.*).

In these latter words, Pope Francis touches on the theme of "compassion", which is increasingly invoked by public opinion as a justification for euthanasia.

John Paul II had already made it unequivocally clear that euthanasia is "a false mercy, and indeed a disturbing 'perversion' of mercy. True 'compassion' leads to sharing another's pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear. Moreover, the act of euthanasia ap-

pears all the more perverse if it is carried out by those, like relatives, who are supposed to treat a family member with patience and love, or by those, such as doctors, who by virtue of their specific profession are supposed to care for the sick person even in their most painful terminal stages" (*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 66).

In short, therefore, Catholic teaching affirms the sacred value of human life; the importance of caring for and accompanying the sick and disabled; the Christian value of suffering; the moral unacceptability of euthanasia; the impossibility of introducing this practice into Catholic hospitals, even in extreme cases, and of collaborating in this regard with civil institutions.

It seems clear that the position of the Brothers of Charity group in Belgium does not conform to such principles. Indeed: 1.)

it rejects the absolute nature of respect for life, or rather, it calls into doubt that the life of an innocent human being must be respected "always", leaving open the possibility of exceptions; 2.) with regard to the importance of the care and accompaniment of psychiatric patients, it refers to the Belgian law on euthanasia, clearly opening the possibility for non-terminal psychiatric patients; 3.) it leaves the responsibility and the right to accept or reject the request for euthanasia ("medical act") to the doctor, thereby excluding the hospital's choice; 4.) it maintains the possibility of euthanasia within the Institute with the justification of enabling family members to avoid the effort of having to find another solution.

The report of the Apostolic Visitor, H.E. Bishop Jan Hendriks, also demonstrated no progress, since it shows the profound difficulty in maintaining the link between the works and the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity, since those responsible do not accept the commitment to finding a viable solution that avoids any form of responsibility for euthanasia on the part of the institution.

Therefore, at the end of this long and painful journey, and noting the lack of willingness to accept the Catholic Doctrine on euthanasia, it is announced, albeit with deep sadness, that the psychiatric hospitals run by the Association *Provincialat des Frères de la Charité asbl* in Belgium, henceforth, can no longer be considered Catholic institutions.

I gladly take this opportunity to confirm my feelings of religious respect.

Cardinal LUIS F. LADARIA, SJ  
Prefect

GIACOMO MORANDI  
Titular Archbishop of Cerveteri  
Secretary

## Georg Ratzinger dies

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served Mass. It was soon clear, first to me and then to him, that our life would be in service to the Church". He also shared childhood memories: "In Tittmoning, Joseph was confirmed by cardinal Michael Faulhaber, the great Archbishop of Munich. He was touched by this moment and had said that he also wanted to become a cardinal. But, just some days after that meeting, after watching the painter who was painting our house, he also said that when he grew up he wanted to be a painter..."

After recalling the dark years of the war and the opposition to Nazism by their father, a gendarme, Georg spoke of their common love for music: "Everyone in our house loved music. Our father, as I already mentioned, had a zither and often played in the evenings. We would sing together. It was always an event for us. In Markt am Inn, there was a music group that fascinated me a great deal. I have always thought that music was one of the most beautiful creations of God. My brother has also always loved music; maybe he got that from me".

Georg Ratzinger was a blunt man, unaccustomed to diplomacy. For example, he never hid the fact that he was not overjoyed by his brother's election to the papacy: "I must admit that I wasn't expecting it and I was a little bit disappointed.... Given his burdensome commitments, I knew that our relationship would change considerably. In any case, behind the human choice of the cardinals was the will of God and to this we cannot say no".

In 2011, Georg said during an interview with a German magazine: "If he could no longer carry out his duties from the point of view of his physical condition, my brother should have the courage to resign". And he was among the first to receive the news, several months ahead of time, of the Pontiff's historic decision to step down from the Petrine ministry, for reasons related to age. "Age makes itself felt", Georg observed after the announcement of the resignation in February 2013. "My brother desires more peace in his old age". Despite problems with his legs and vision, the elder brother of the Pope emeritus continued to travel from Regensburg to Rome, spending several periods in the *Mater Ecclesiae* monastery, often keeping Benedict company.



## ANGELUS

*On Sunday, 28 June, after praying the Angelus with the faithful gathered in Saint Peter's Square, the Holy Father's thoughts turned to the people of Syria, Yemen and Ukraine, who are living through an emergency situation caused by the serious political, social and humanitarian crises. Earlier, he had commented on the Gospel passage of Matthew (10:37-42). The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which he delivered in Italian.*



Pope Francis prays for Yemen and Ukraine

## Peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

This Sunday, the Gospel (cf. Mt 10:37-42) forcefully echoes the invitation to live out our bond with the Lord fully and without hesitation. Jesus asks his disciples to take the demands of the Gospel seriously, even when that requires sacrifice and effort.

The first demanding request that he addresses to those who follow him is that of putting love for him above family affection. He says: "He who loves father or mother ... son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (v. 37). Jesus certainly does not intend to undervalue love for parents and children, but he knows that if family bonds are put in first place, they can deviate from the true good. We see this: some forms of corruption in governments come about precisely because love for family is greater than love for country, and so they put family members in charge. It is the same with Jesus: when love [for family] is greater than [it is] for him, it is not good. All of us can give many examples in this regard, not to mention those situations in which family affections are intermingled with choices that are contrary to the Gospel. When, instead, love for parents and children is inspired and purified by love for the Lord, it then becomes wholly fruitful and produces good fruits within the family itself and well beyond it. Jesus says this phrase in this sense. Let us also remember how Jesus rebukes the doctors of the law who cause their parents to lack what is necessary to them on the pretext of offering it at the altar, of giving it to the Church (cf. Mk 7:8-13). He rebukes them! True love for Jesus requires a true love for parents and children, but if we seek out family interests first, this always leads to the wrong path.

Then, Jesus says to his disciples: "he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:38). This means

following him along the path that he himself trod, without looking for shortcuts. There is no true love without the cross, that is, without a personal price to pay. Many mothers, many fathers who sacrifice a great deal for their children, and bear true sacrifices, crosses, because they love them, say this. And the cross is not frightening when borne with Jesus, because he is always at our side to support us in the hour of the most difficult trial, to give us strength and courage. Nor is it helpful to get agitated to preserve one's own life through fearful or egotistical behaviour. Jesus admonishes: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake" – that is, for love, for love of Jesus, love for one's neighbour, for service towards others – "will find it" (v. 39). This is the Gospel paradox. But we have many, many examples of this too, thank God! We see it in these days. How many people, how many people, are bearing crosses to help others; they sacrifice themselves to help others who are in need in this pandemic. But, always with Jesus, it can be done. The fullness of life and of joy is found by giving oneself for the Gospel and for our brothers and sisters, with openness, welcoming and goodness.

In so doing, we can experience God's generosity and gratitude.

Jesus reminds us of this: "He who receives you receives me ... And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water ... shall not lose his reward" (vv. 40, 42). God's generous gratitude takes into account even the smallest gesture of love and service given to our brothers and sisters. In these days, I heard from a priest who was moved because a child approached him in his parish and said, "Father, this is my savings; not very much. It is for the poor, for those who are in need today because of the pandemic". A small thing, but a great thing. It is a contagious gratitude, which helps each of us to be grateful to those who take care of our needs. When someone offers us a service, we should not think that we deserve everything. No, many services are carried out freely. Think of volunteer work, which is one of the greatest things about Italian society. The volunteers ... And how many of them have lost their lives in this pandemic. They do it out of love, simply to serve. Gratitude, appreciation is, first of all, good manners, but it is also a characteristic of a Christian. It is a simple but genuine sign of the Kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of gratuitous and grateful love.

May Mary Most Holy, who loved Jesus more than her own life and followed him even to the cross, help us to always put

ourselves before God with willing hearts, allowing his Word to judge our behaviour and our choices.

*After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:*

Dear brothers and sisters, this Tuesday, 30 June, the European Union and the United Nations' Fourth Conference on "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" will take place. Let us pray for this important meeting, so that it may improve the dramatic situation of the Syrian people and neighbouring peoples, particularly from Lebanon, in the context of serious socio-political and economic crises that have been made even more difficult by the pandemic. Consider that there are hungry children, who have nothing to eat! Please, may the leaders be capable of making peace.

I also invite everyone to pray for the population of Yemen, here too, especially the children, who are suffering as a result of the very serious humanitarian crisis, and also for those affected by the severe floods in Western Ukraine: may they experience the comfort of the Lord and the help of their brethren.

I address my greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from other countries. I see flags: Polish, German, and so many! In particular, I greet those who, here this morning in Rome, attended the Mass in the Congolese rite, praying for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I greet the Congolese delegation present here! These Congolese people are good!

I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! And I will see you tomorrow for the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

