An additional 12 months, until 10 December 2021

Holy Father extends Loreto Jubilee

Pope Francis has extended the Loreto Jubilee, associated with the centenary of the proclamation of Our Lady of Loreto as Patron Saint of Aviation, until 10 December 2021. The announcement was made on Friday, 14 August, by the Papal Delegate Archbishop Fabio Dal Cin following the recitation of the Angelus during the vigil for the Solemnity of the Assumption. The Prelate expressed to the Pontiff “heartfelt gratitude, my own, of the entire military and civilian air force, of all the faithful, the people of Loreto, pilgrims and devotees of the Holy House, for this great gift. In this difficult time for humanity, the Holy Mother Church gives us another twelve months to start anew from Christ, allowing ourselves to be accompanied by Mary, a sign for all of consolation and certain hope”. The Jubilee, which officially began with the opening of the Holy Door on 8 December 2019 in the presence of Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin – and was originally to conclude on 10 December 2020 –, thus renewal for an additional 12 months the experience of grace and forgiveness for all the faithful who will visit the Papal Shrine. The gratitude also extends to the many chapels in civilian airports and military air force bases throughout the world.

“Many times this year”, Archbishop Dal Cin recalled, “the Holy Father has manifested his closeness to the Shrine of the Holy House: with his visit on 25 March 2019, during which he signed the Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit”; with the concession and the extension of the Loreto Jubilee; with the inscription of 10 December on the Roman calendar for the facultative memorial of the Blessed Virgin of Loreto; and lastly with the insertion of three new invocations into the Litany of Loreto: Mater Misericordiae, Mater Spei and Solacium Migrantium”.

The following is a translation of the text of the Decree by which Pope Francis’ Apostolic Penitentiary, “on special mandate”, extends the Jubilee.

Prot. n. 580/20/1

DECREE

The Apostolic Penitentiary, having received the request of 31 June 2020 presented by the Most Excellent and Reverend Fabio Dal Cin, Archbishop Prelate of the Holy House of Loretana, Papal Delegate to the Shrine of Loreto and the Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua, by special mandate of His Holiness Pope Francis, with the present Decree, extends until 10 December 2021, in favour of the faithful, each and every spiritual benefit already ritually granted in accordance with the Decree (Prot. n. 271/19/1) of 1 November 2019 for the entire Jubilee Year, announced from 8 December 2019 to 10 December 2020, but unfortunately not celebrated in its entirety due to the “Covid-19” epidemic.

The Jubilee granted for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of when the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto was constituted by Pope Benedict XV as Principal Patroness to God of all air travellers.

Certainly, the faithful, by the Church’s generous postponement, will draw good intentions and spiritual vigour to be implemented in life according to the law of the Gospel, in hierarchical communion and filial devotion to the Supreme Pontiff, the visible foundation of the Catholic Church, and to their Bishop.

Notwithstanding any disposition to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the seat of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on 16 July 2020, memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Carmel.

Cardinal MAURO Piacenza
Major Penitentiary
Krzysztof Nykiel
Regent
VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Wednesday, 12 August
Bishop Giorgio Marengo, imc, titular Bishop of Castra Severiana, Pre- insect Apostolic of Ulaanbaatar, Mone- golia
H. E. Ms Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Wednesday, 19 August
Archbishop Henryk Mieczyslaw Jagodzinski, titular Archbishop of Limosano, Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana
Archbishop Mitja Leskovar, titular Archbishop of Benevento, Apostolic Nuncio to Iraq

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resigna- tion of Bishop Rubén Oscar Fras- sía from his office as Bishop of the Diocese of Avellane-Latini, Ar- gentina (7 Aug.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Laurent Perceau as Bishop of Nantes, France. Until now he has served as Bishop of Moulins, France (11 Aug.).

Bishop Perceau, 58, was born in Dijon, France. He was ordained a priest on 14 June 1992. He was ordained a bishop on 14 April 2007, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Moulins.

The Holy Father accepted the resigna- tion of Bishop Meinrad Franz Josef Merkel, C.SS.R., from his office as Bishop of the Diocese of Humaitá, Brazil (12 Aug.).

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Humaitá, Fr Antonio Fontinel de Melo from the depository of the Archdiocese of Porto Velho. Until now he has served as parish priest of the Cathedral of “Sagrado Corção de Jesus” and treasurer of the Archdiocese (12 Aug.).

Bishop-elect Fontinel de Melo, 52, was born in Camocim, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 18 September 1999. He studied theology and philosophy and has specialized in educational methodology and in Sacred Scripture.

Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi on the jurisdiction of Oriental Catholic Patriarchs on the Arabian Peninsula

Considering the historical prerogatives of the juris- diction of the Oriental Catholic Patriarchs in the Arabian Peninsula, at their own expressed request and in view of a greater spiritual good for their faithful, after deep and prolonged reflection on the matter, regulated until now by the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 6 March 2003, confirmed by the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 8 April 2006, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Secretary of State on 18 May 2020, the Supreme Pontiff Francis has ordered the following:

1. the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 6 March 2003, confirmed by the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 8 April 2006, with regard to the Oriental Catholic Patriarchs, is disregarded. At the same time, the jurisdiction of each and every Oriental Catholic Patriarch on the entire Arabian Peninsula (Apostolic Vicariates of Northern Arabia and Southern Arabia) is extended;

2. the pastoral care of the Oriental faithful over whom exercise jurisdiction shall be carried out in coordination with the Apostolic Vicars;

3. Except for the prerogatives of Papal Represent- atives, Apostolic Vicars are the representatives of the Catholic Church to the political Authorities of the respective Countries and, in this context, the Oriental Patriarchs shall refer to them;

4. notwithstanding can. 85 § 1 of the CCEO, the eventual erection of new ecclesiastical circumscrip- tions by the Synods of the Patriarchal Churches sui iuris shall be subject to the prior authorization of the Apostolic See. This derogation is estab- lished for five years, after which it will be re-examined;

5. the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 6 March 2003, confirmed by the Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi of 8 April 2006 remains in effect for all the Oriental faithful who do not belong to the Patriarchal Churches sui iuris present in the Arabian Peninsula. The present Rescriptum ex Audientia Ss.mi shall be promulgated by publication in L'Osservatore Romano, entering into force on 6 August 2020, and then shall be published in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis.

From the Vatican, 21 July 2020
Cardinal Pietro Parolin Secretary of State of His Holiness

Holy Father sends initial aid to Lebanon

In a statement on Friday, 7 August, the Holy Father has sent an initial aid package of 250,000 euros to meet the needs of the Christian community of Lebanon during these moments of difficulty and suffering.

The aid has been sent through the Apostolic Nunciature of Beirut and will be used to assist those affected by the terrible explosion in the Port of Beirut on 4 August that caused hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of injured and displaced persons. An emergency first aid response is currently taking place with medical care, shelters for the displaced and centres for basic needs made available by the Church through Caritas Lebanon, Caritas Integralis and several Caritas sister organizations.

A sign of his attention and closeness to the people of Lebanon, the Pope’s donation is a concrete gesture that follows the appeal he made at the end of the General Audience on Wednesday, 5 August, and the prayer inten- tion he entrusted to that day to the Saùs Populi Romani during his visit to Basilia of Saint Mary Major.
Healing from a crisis
A return to ‘normality’ should not include injustices

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The pandemic has exposed the plight of the poor and the great inequality that reigns in the world. And while the virus doesn’t distinguish between people, it has found, in its devastating path, great inequalities and discrimination. And it has exacerbated them!

The response to the pandemic is therefore twofold. On the one hand, it is essential to find a cure for this small but terrible virus, which has brought the whole world to its knees. On the other, we must also cure a larger virus, that of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, marginalization, and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor (EG, 19).

Faith, hope and love necessarily push us towards this preference of those most in need, which goes beyond necessary assistance (cf. EG, 19).

And we are led to this by the love of Christ, who loved us to the extreme (cf. Jn 13:1), and [this love] reaches the boundaries, the margins, the existential frontiers. Bringing the peripheries to the centre means focusing our life on Christ, who “became poor” for our sake, to enrich us. He made himself one of us and for this, at the centre of the Gospel, at the centre of Jesus’ proclamation, there is this option.

Christ himself, who is God, despised himself, making himself similar to men; and he did not choose a life of privilege, but he chose the condition of a servant (cf. Phil 2:6-7). He annihiliated himself by making himself a servant. He was born into a humble family and worked as a craftsman. At the beginning of his preaching, he announced that in the Kingdom of God the poor are blessed (cf. Mt 5:3-10; Lk 6:20; EGG, 197). He stood among the sick, the poor, the excluded, showing them God’s merciful love (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 2444). And many times he was judged an impure man because he went to the sick, to lepers which, according to the law of the time, made people impure. And he took risks to be near the poor.

This is why Jesus’ followers can be recognized by their closeness to the poor, the little ones, the sick and the imprisoned, the excluded and the forgotten, those without food and clothing (cf. Mt 25:31-36; CCC, 2445). We can read that famous parameter by which we will all be judged, we will all be judged. It is Matthew, chapter 25. This is a key criterion of Christian authenticity (cf. Gal 2:10; EG, 195).

Some mistakenly think that this preferential love for the poor is a task for the few, but in reality it is the mission of the Church as a whole, as Saint John Paul II said (cf. St John Paul II, Solicitudo Ret Socialis, 43). “Each individual Christian and every creature by them, who know the suffering Christ well, letting ourselves be ‘infected’ by their experience of salvation, by their wisdom and by their creativitiy (cf. ibid). Sharing with the poor means mutual enrichment. And, if there are unhealthy social structures that prevent them from dreaming of the future, we must work together to heal them, to change them (cf. ibid, 195).

And we are led to this by the love of Christ, who loved us to the extreme (cf. Jn 13:1) and [this love] reaches the boundaries, the margins, the existential frontiers. Bringing the peripheries to the centre means focusing our life on Christ, who “became poor” for us, to enrich us “by his poverty” (2 Cor 8:9).

We are all worried about the social consequences of the pandemic. All of us. Many people want to return to normality and resume economic activities. Certainly, but this ‘normality’ should not include social injustices and the degradation of the environment. The pandemic is a crisis, and we do not emerge from a crisis the same as before: we come out of it better, or we come out of it worse. We should come out of it better, to counter social injustices and environmental damage. Today we have an opportunity to build something different. For example, we can nurture an economy of integral development of the poor, and not of providing assistance. By this I do not wish to condemn assistance: aid is important. Let us think of the volunteer sector, which is one of the best structures of the Italian Church. But we must go beyond this, to resolve the problems that lead us to provide aid. An economy that does not resort to remedies that in fact poison society, such as profits not linked to the creation of dignified jobs (cf. EG, 204). This type of profit is dissociated from the real economy, which should bring benefits to the common people (cf. Laudato Si’ (LS), 109), and in addition is at times indifferent to the damage inflicted on our common home. The preferential option for the poor, this ethical-social need that comes from God’s love (cf. LS, 158), inspires us to conceive of and design an economy where people, and especially the poorest, are at the centre.

And it also encourages us to plan the treatment of virus by prioritizing those who are most in need. It would be said if, with regards to the Covid-19 vaccine, priority were to be given to the richest? It would be said if this vaccine were to become the property of this nation or another, rather than universal and for all. And what a scandal it would be if all the economic assistance we are observing — most of it with public money — were to focus on rescuing those industries that do not contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, the promotion of the least, the common good or the care of creation (ibid.). These are criteria for choosing which industries should be helped: those which contribute to the inclusion of the excluded, to the promotion of the least, to the common good and the care of creation. Four criteria.

If the virus were to intensify again in a world that is unjust to the poor and most vulnerable, then we must change this world. Following the example of Jesus, the doctor of integral divine love, that is, of physical, social and spiritual healing (cf. Jn 6:9-13) — like the healing worked by Jesus — we must act now, to heal the epidemics caused by small, invisible viruses, and to heal those caused by the great and visible social injustices. I propose that this be done by starting from the love of God, placing the peripheries at the centre and the least in first place. Not forgetting that parameter by which we will be judged, Matthew, Chapter 25.

Let us put it into practice in this recovery from the epidemic. And starting from this tangible love anchored in hope and founded in faith, a healthier world will be possible. Otherwise, we will come out of the crisis worse off. May the Lord help us, and give us the strength to come out of it better, responding to the needs of today’s world.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful. My thoughts turn especially to those families who have had to forego their summer holidays this year; I entrust them to the Lord that he will grant them peace and joy. May God bless you!

Lastly, my thoughts turn to the elderly, young people, the sick and newlyweds. Tomorrow we will celebrate the liturgical memory of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, a great Doctor of the Church, and above all a tender cantor of Our Lady. May his example stir in each one the desire to trustingly surrender ourselves to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin, consoler of the afflicted.

2 Benedict XVI, Address at the Inaugural Session of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (15 May 2007).
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

The pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected everyone is. We cannot take care of one another, starting with the least, with those who are most immediately in need, including creation, we cannot heal the world.

The effort of so many people who have been offering evidence of human and Christian love for neighbour, dedicating themselves to the sick even at the risk of their own health, is commendable. They are heroes! However, the coronavirus is not the only disease to be fought, but rather, the pandemic has shed light on broader social ills. One of these is a distorted view of the person, a perspective that ignores the dignity and relational character of the person.

The Pontiff emphasizes the need to heal the world in this time of pandemic, with the help of grace, we strive to develop our creativity and enthusiasm in order to resolve the ills of the past. We understand and develop our abilities as responsibilities that arise from this faith (lec.,) and responsibilities from God to be placed at the service of humanity and of creation.

While we are working for a cure for a virus that strikes everyone without distinction, faith exhorts us to commit ourselves seriously and actively to combat indifference in the face of violations of human dignity. This culture of indifference that accompanies the throwaway culture: things that do not affect me, do not interest me. Faith always requires that we allow ourselves to be healed and converted from our individualism, whether personal or collective; party individualism, for example.

May the Lord “restore our sight” so we may rediscover what it means to be members of the human family. And may this sight be translated into concrete actions of compassion and respect for every person and of care and safeguarding of our common home.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful. As we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I entrust you and your families to her maternal intercession, that she may guide us on our pilgrim way to the fullness of Christ’s promises. And I ask you please to pray for me. May God bless you!

Lastly my thoughts turn to the elderly, young people, the sick and newborns. Be courageous in facing even life’s difficult moments, trusting in the help of God and Our Lady. May God Bless you.

Pope Francis continued his series of catechises on healing the world at the General Audience on Wednesday morning, 12 August, highlighting that we cannot remain “indifferent nor individualistic” before the broader social issues brought to light by the Covid-19 pandemic. Selfish attitudes, he stressed, destroy the harmony created by God. Earlier, the Holy Father had commented on the Reading from Genesis (4:27-28; 5:27), and reflected on the theme of faith and human dignity. The following is a translation of the Pope’s catechises which he delivered in Italian from the private library of the Vatican’s Apostolic Palace.

Individualism and indifference destroy social harmony

The Pontiff emphasizes the need to heal the world in this time of pandemic, with the help of grace, we strive to develop our creativity and enthusiasm in order to resolve the ills of the past. We understand and develop our abilities as responsibilities that arise from this faith (lec.,) and responsibilities from God to be placed at the service of humanity and of creation.

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Lastly my thoughts turn to the elderly, young people, the sick and newborns. Be courageous in facing even life’s difficult moments, trusting in the help of God and Our Lady. May God Bless you.
Pope Francis sent a message to the Franciscan Minim Sisters of the Sacred Heart on Saturday, 8 August, to mark the liturgical memory of the Congregation’s Foundress, Blessed Maria Margherita Caiani, who brought to life the Institute of the Franciscan Minim Sisters of the Sacred Heart in 1902. I am happy that you, her spiritual daughters, wish to prepare yourselves for this occasion with the jubilee year in a narrow and worthwhile pathway but, if it is followed to the end, life becomes fruitful. As it was for the Virgin Mary, regarded from On high precisely because she was humble, small (cf. Lk 1:47), and in this way she became the Mother of God.

Franciscan, Minim, and she specified “of the Sacred Heart”, in order to settle your roots at the wellspring of Charity. The love that Jesus has for us does not dazzle with great special effects that quickly vanish; rather, it is a concrete and faithful love, made of closeness, of gestures that lift us and give us dignity and confidence. Let us consider the two disciples of Emmaus who, confused and disheartened, were returning to their home in the evening of Easter (cf. Lk 24:13-35). The Lord drew near them, not as a hero but as a travelling companion; as they were walking he explained to them “in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (v. 27). And their hearts burned with joy; and then he broke the bread, “and their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (v. 30).

May you love with the Heart of Jesus, with gestures rich in tenderness. And the first place in which to live this simple and concrete love is your religious community.

“Of the Sacred Heart” is not just a complement, but says much more: it speaks of belonging. The Lord gave you life, he stirred you to faith and called you to him in consecrated life by drawing you to his Heart. This belonging is manifested in a particular way in prayer. Our whole life is called, with the grace of the Spirit, to become prayer. For this reason we must allow the Lord to remain united to us always. And in this way he transforms us, day after day, making our heart ever more akin to his own.

There are moments in the day that help us this union with God: Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration, meditating on the Word, the Rosary, spiritual reading. May your approach to the Lord be full of joy, the joy of a child running towards his parents to embrace and kiss them. This joy attracts and is contagious! At times it seems there are thousands of other things more necessary to do, or we may feel the effort of being with Jesus; but, like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus calls us to stay there, close to him (cf. Mk 14:38). Let us allow the Lord to remain united to us always.

Spurred by the Sacred Heart, you will be mothers to the brothers and sisters you meet “from the cradle to the grave”, as Blessed Maria Margherita used to say. You will joyfully proclaim that the Lord always looks on us with mercy; he has a merciful Heart.

Your charism also has a reparative dimension. This is a great service for the good of the world. Sin ruins the work that God created beautiful. With your prayers and your small gestures, you cast onto the field of the world the seed of the love of God who makes all things new. When the seed falls to the ground it does not make any noise, such are the many works that you bring forth in Italy, Brazil, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Bethlehem, especially in favour of children and young people. Gestures that are capable of making the world more beautiful, of brightening it with a ray of God’s love.

Dear sisters, I wish you a holy and fruitful centenary! I assure you of my remembrance to the Lord, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary; and you too, please, do not forget to pray for me. I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to those who are entrusted to your charity.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 8 August 2020
Hagia Sophia: a school of enriching diversity

"Hagia Sophia is one of those world objects that speak powerfully about God, and that should continue to be available in its fullness and also in its contradictory names as a symbol that conveys universal religion and diverse cultures." Friedrich Claudia Monge, a pre-eminent Dominican, head of the centre for intercultural dialogue at the Dominican Study Institute, Jerusalem (Israel), who has written about the strategies and implications of what has occurred in recent weeks, with the Turkish President’s decision to convert the grand Byzantine basilica back into a mosque. In this lengthy conversation with Vatican News, the priest recreates the principal stages of the monument’s history that are linked to fierce divisions among Christians before the Turkish conquest.

**Fr Monge, are you briefly cover the history of the basilica of Hagia Sophia?**

It’s impossible to cover the extr- 

terrestrial and multidisciplinary history 

of Hagia Sophia, but I can describe the 

building consecrated in 537 by Emperor 

Justinian in Constantinople, which was 

considered an incomparable and unique 

work of art by the contemporaries of 

the Emperor, who considered it as 

the monument to the universal Church. 

Thus, it was considered in every cultural 

circle as an example and a source of 

inspiration for architecture, art, and 

theology.

**What were the consequences of these events for the Christian world?**

From the standpoint of Christianity, 

the analysis is quite different. For 

the papacy the traumatic end of 

the Schism and the reunion of 

the Churches have never been a 

true reality. There is no doubt that 

the offerings of an enormous number 

of churches, every church, every monastery, of Constantinople 

had roles of great spiritual impor-

tance in the history of the 

Churches. The Great Schism 

between the Eastern and Western 

Churches began in Hagia Sophia 

in 1453. In Hagia Sophia the splendour 

of the Eastern Church influenced 

the Ottoman people to conversion.

**Could you say that basilica was a place that was symbol of the force 

of conscience among Christians?**

Hagia Sophia also knew the 

terrible and forgotten events of the 

Christian West, at the time of the 

fourth Crusade. In fact, it is impossible to delive to the causes of the crusades, which were 

largely caused by the preaching of 

the Latin Church.

**How do you see the monument today?**

The monument is today a symbol 

of the multicultural coexistence of 

Christians and Muslims — a place 

where different cultures and religions 

have coexisted and continue to do so 

today. The Hagia Sophia is a place 

that has witnessed the triumphs and 

failures of the Ottoman Empire, 

which was founded on the ruins of the 

Byzantine Empire.

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Byzantine Empire.
For the conversion, liberation and salvation of the World

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, 15 August, the Diocese of Pyongyang was dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima during a Eucharistic celebration in the Myong-dong Cathedral. Presided by Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung, Apostolic Nuncio to Korea and Apostolic Nuncio to Korea and Mongolia, and Auxiliary Bishops of Seoul Timothy Yu Gyoung-chon and Job Koo Yobi.

Pope Francis marked the occasion by sending a message and his Apostolic Blessing to Cardinal Yeom Soo-jung “I am certain that the graces of this celebration will deepen in all of you the desire to listen to the Good News of the Gospel that allows us to open our hearts to a new way of thinking that overcomes division and to weave just and fraternal relations”, the Pope wrote. As the day coincided with the 79th National Liberation Day, (when Korea was freed from Japanese colonial rule) the Holy Father continued, “I ask all of you to join in prayer for the conversion of hearts and for the triumph of a culture of life, reconciliation, fraternal love and lasting peace on the Korean peninsula”. The challenge in this rapidly shrinking world, he continued is “not only to respect ourselves but also to feel responsible for one another, building bridges and promoting sustainable human development, founded on the respect of authentic values and the inviolable dignity of all”.

During his homily, Cardinal Yeom Soo-jung thanked the Pope for his message and humbly prayed that the people of North and South Korea will soon be able to “celebrate, together and hand in hand, the feast of the Assumption of Mary on National Liberation Day as a time of authentic liberation”. In order to achieve authentic liberation, he stressed the need for a conversion of all the interested parties, beginning with the leaders of North and South Korea and of the international community.

The first step of the sporting initiative “We Run Together” has concluded. The event was promoted by Athletica Vaticana and supported by Pope Francis to raise funds to help two hospitals that have been at the heart of the fight against Covid-19. The 35,004 euros raised from the auctions of personal gifts donated by Pope Francis and various athletes will go to the medical and nursing staff that have tirelessly looked after patients affected by the coronavirus.

On 20 May, in Castelporziano, Italy, the first meeting was to take place bringing together great Olympic champions, international teams and people with physical and intellectual disabilities, prisoners and refugees, but the initiative was postponed due to the pandemic. However, Athletica Vaticana did not lose hope as it received support from the Pope who, with a video message, explained “have already followed the Pope’s call for solidarity. This is the spirit of Athletica Vaticana: to express the beauty of the ability to ‘run’, the same dignity to everyone from professional soccer players like Cristiano Ronaldo to a disabled boy who is embarrassed to leave his home.”

No fancy agency or advertisement was used, just ‘word of mouth’ – in short, Francis style’, a touch of which ran through the entire initiative, starting from the ‘prizes’ donated by the Pope for auction, to the Mass offered dear to the champion. But the most meaningful experiences were the special encounters, as some of the athletes opened their homes and prepared dinner to bear witness to the beauty of the ‘culture of inclusion’.

Now Athletica Vaticana is starting again with even more enthusiasm and this concrete style of solidarity, encouraging everyone to “run together”, in a spirit of Christian witness among the people, in the streets and in sports locations. Stronger than ever thanks to the witness of Sara Vargetto: very speedy with her wheelchair, the 12-year-old girl who suffers from an autoimmune disease, was among the ‘honorary’ athletes whom the Pope had the opportunity to encourage personally.

In India Catholic volunteers help to bury victims of the virus

Dying with dignity

The burial of people who die of coronavirus has become a serious problem in society... Some do not know what to do and who to contact when their loved ones die of coronavirus”, Fr Mathew Navarakkattu, director of youth pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Idukki shared with fides. He spoke about events in his diocese in India where in recent days several dozen priests and young people joined forces to provide a dignified burial to victims of Covid-19, regardless of religious profession, in a work of mercy that reveals the Church’s closeness to the people’s suffering. In addition, the group of volunteers will help with the local government with the distribution of food, medicine and other services in the epidemic areas of the district. “About 48 volunteers”, the priest explained, “have already followed a special training course by the local health departments and, in this work, they will follow the directives of the health department. We want to show closeness, solidarity and proximity also in the tragic event of death”. Also in Kerala, Subrhadaya Samarttians, a Catholic organization that oversees projects of charity and solidarity in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, has formed a special team that is already in operation and has helped in several cases.

Another diocese that has joined the initiative is Faridabad, where a group of 12 priests, 10 sisters and 25 lay people have gathered to administer the sacraments and attend and assist in the burial of victims of the coronavirus. “About 90 people from 30 parishes volunteered”, said Father Julius Job, coordinator of the team in Faridabad. The diocese wants to ensure that anyone in the diocese that dies of Covid-19 is given a dignified burial. Fr Job indicated that “the group will not only attend the funeral, but will reach people with Covid-19 for their spiritual needs”. The Church is beside her people in times of great suffering. Our people need not to feel excluded from the celebration of the sacraments”. Archbishop Kurkose Bharanikulangara also called on his priests to be close and to help with the burial of parishioners, but he specified that, even if in principle the idea had been addressed to Catholics in the diocese, “we are willing to extend our service to people of other faiths”.

A mother’s gratitude

Pope Francis baptizes formerly conjoined twins

Hermine Nzotto, the mother of former conjoined twins whose lives were saved by the medical intervention of Vatican-run Bambino Gesù Hospital, has sent a letter to Pope Francis to thank him for personally baptizing her twins at a private ceremony held at Santa Marta, earlier this month. To have my daughters baptized by the Holy Father “gives me confirmation that God is truly close to the least ones”, the twins’ mother, who hails from the Central African Republic, said. “If one day my daughters will be able to be part of the fortunate children of this world, that is, able to go to school and learn what I do not know and what I too am now aspiring to know so as to be able to one day read Bible passages to my daughters”, Nzotto wrote to the Pope, “then it is not a Holy Door that you opened in Bangui in 2015 which was closed one year later, but rather you have built a bridge for eternity where the needy like I was and my girls will also like the team of doctors who care for my inseparable separated ones”. “Prayer”, she concluded in her letter which also expressed her gratitude to the Hospital’s doctors and staff, “is what can unite the people of the world. I will pray to Mary for you but I have no need to ask you to do the same because those who are like your Holiness, have challenged the danger of mosquito bites and the rebellion of 2015 in Central Africa, know how to ask Mary for what the world needs”. 
The Pope encourages Knights of Columbus to follow the example of their Founder Fr McGivney

Brothers to the people in need

The Knights of Columbus have donated more than 77 million hours to works of charity over the past year, although this is only the point of departure. The now approaching beatification of their Founder—Fr Michael McGivney, who will be raised to the Honours of the Altar on 30 October—will be for all the Knights of Columbus an opportunity "to deepen their commitment live as missionary disciples in charity, unity and fraternity", nourishing that "charitable support" that with "spirit of Christian solidarity", the lay order provides to all those who are suffering at this time due to the pandemic, and to the forgotten and the marginalized, as they have done since their very beginnings. This is the mandate that Pope Francis entrusted to the Knights of Columbus in a letter addressed to the Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

This year's 158th convention of the Knights of Columbus took place on 4 August, virtually, due to the Covid-19 emergency.

It is precisely the "spirit of Christian solidarity" that "marked in a special way the life and activity of your Founder, the Venerable Michael McGivney", Fr McGivney undersigned. As a parish priest, Fr McGivney was close in a practical way to the daily life of people. He "knew well and wished to bear prophetic witness to God's dream for a more fraternal, just and equitable world in which all are recognized as neighbours and no one is left behind".

The message sent to Mr Anderson, recalls that the entire history of the order was shaped by these values, the true and proper nourishment of their works of support to the evangelizing mission of the Church. Founded in 1882 by Fr McGivney and a group of lay Catholics, the association began its activities by dedicating itself to the most marginalized segments of society, firstly widows and orphans. The son of Irish immigrants, Fr McGivney served his pastoral ministry as vice parish priest in New Haven and then as parish priest in Thomaston, Connecticut. At the announcement of the beatification of Fr McGivney, Supreme Knight Anderson described him and his spiritual legacy in the following way: "Fr McGivney has inspired generations of Catholic men to roll up their sleeves and to put their faith into action".

One of the first concerns of the Founder was "to promote the material and spiritual welfare of working men and their families". Thus since the earliest days, "care for the family has been a priority for the Knights of Columbus". This attention still continues today with a "strong and courageous defense of the inviolable dignity of human life" and its conception", and with a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening family life. Because it is precisely in supporting and strengthening family life, the letter underscores that "individuals and societies grow in solidarity, mutual respect, truth, mercy and love. At a time of social unrest, these virtues are all the more necessary in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and justice".

This is the mission undertaken by the Knights of Columbus, at this fundamental crossroads of their history, as they look back at their roots with renewed pride. The decision announced at the annual convention to open the pilgrimage Center will have its offices in the building which currently houses the museum of the order's history. In view of Fr McGivney's vision, it will be an instrument that will help people become better acquainted with him and his works. Moreover, during the convention the annual report was presented, a testimony of how those roots continue to bear fruit still today. The Knights of Columbus are present in 14 countries and number two million members who are committed to being brothers and to taking care of those who are suffering and in need. Over the past year, the annual report states, this participation resulted not only in a considerable economic commitment to acts of charity (over 187 million dollars), but also and above all, in the personal participation of its members, which amounted to millions of hours of service, time dedicated to others. Indeed, even during the challenging time of the Covid-19 emergency, when the project "no one is left behind" took shape, the wide spectrum of initiatives (from economic aid to families and parishes, to food collections and personal assistance services) has benefited more than one million people.

The Pontiff, Cardinal Parolin writes, "is grateful for these and for the many other countless ways in which the Knights of Columbus continue to bear prophetic witness to God's dream for a more fraternal, just and equitable world in which all are recognized as neighbours and no one is left behind".

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Hagia Sophia a school of enriching diversity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

sands of artistic masterpieces that re-
main in places of worship are not necessarily the most appropriate en-
vironment for the intimacy of true prayer. However we cannot under-
estimate the importance of Beauty be-
cause beauty is a name of God and this is how God is known. This also holds true for Muslims alike. And beauty, as an experience and not simply an idea, is pro-
apaedic to the spiritual encounter: it makes us feel that there is 'something more' within things; it is an open fissure on the more, on the beyond, the mystery of infinity. Honestly, the prospect of an inter-
religious use of this lesson, by continu-
ally repudiates the 2019 Abu Dh-
abi Declaration. I respect but do not share these judgments. On the con-
trary, it seems to me that this un-
doubtedly new moment of tension, this apparent setback to dialogue, confirms the fact that, as the Docu-
ment on Human Fraternity states, it is not possible without education and mutual awareness of each one's his-
tory. A decisive qualitative leap was made in Abu Dhabi, in speaking of inclusive citizenship and of respect for diversity as wise divine Will, as well as a potential richness for our societies. The plurisecular artistic masterpieces are essential places for telling one's history in dialogue with others telling their history. Of course this narrative must be equipped with an appropriate language, often to be totally created. It is a firing search for new words and experiences un-
derstandable as analogical and not assimilable. In a believer's perspective, one realizes that you cannot access the content of faith but through the use of propositions/meditations which are by nature inadequate and perfectible. One can touch by hand the poverty of the human spirit, but not the content of faith as such. The act of theologizing is rendered con-
crete by renouncing the claim of having the object in order to let oneself be questioned by the pres-
ence of the other, whether Christian or not, believer or not.

You have lived in Istanbul for many years. What reactions have you ob-
served to the events of recent weeks?

I will mention only one. A Turk-
ish Muslim friend wrote to me a few days ago that he feels a deep sad-
ness over the fact that the availabil-
ity of Hagia Sophia will be drastic-
ally reduced, because in contemplat-
ing this masterpiece many times, in its complex and layered history, he learned the very importance of dia-
logue. How will you respond to him?

I would like to tell him that now he will truly be able to make valu-
able use of this lesson, by continu-
ally cultivating his inter-religious re-
lationships with people in the flesh, because dialogue continues to be possible through encounter.
Pope renews appeal for Lebanon and recalls the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

At the end of the Angelus on Sunday, 9 August, the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, Pope Francis called for commitment to “a world completely free of nuclear weapons.”

Earlier, he had reflected on the day’s Gospel reading on the narrative of Jesus walking on the water of the stormy lake. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s thoughts which he shared in Italian with the faithful gathered in Saint Peter’s Square.

A world completely free of nuclear weapons

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

This Sunday’s Gospel passage (cf. Mt 14:22-27) speaks of Jesus walking on the water of the stormy lake. After feeding the crowd with five loaves and two fish, as we saw last Sunday, Jesus commands the disciples to get into the boat and return to the other shore. He takes his leave from the people and then climbs the hill, alone, to pray. He immerses himself in communion with the Father.

During the night-time lake crossing, the disciples’ boat is hindered by a sudden wind storm. This is normal on a lake. At a certain point, they see someone walking on the water, coming toward them. Upset, they think it is a ghost and cry out in fear. Jesus reassures them: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear”. Then Peter – Peter who was so decisive answers: “Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water”. A challenge. And Jesus says to him: “Come” Peter gets out of the boat and takes a few steps; then the wind and waves frighten him and he begins to sink. “Lord, save me”, he cries, and Jesus grasps him by the hand and says to him: “O man of little faith, why did you doubt?”

This narrative is an invitation to abandon ourselves trustingly to God in every moment of our life, especially in the moment of trial and turmoil. When we have strong feelings of doubt and fear and we seem to be sinking, in life’s difficult moments when everything becomes dark, we must not be ashamed to cry out like Peter: “Lord, save me” (v. 30). To knock on God’s heart, on Jesus’ heart. “Lord, save me”. It is a beautiful prayer! We can repeat it many times. “Lord, save me”. And the gesture of Jesus, who immediately reaches out his hand and grasps that of his friend, should be contemplated at length: this is Jesus. Jesus does this.

Jesus is the hand of the Father who never abandons us, the strong and faithful hand of the Father who always and only wants what is good for us. God is not a loud sound, God is not a hurricane, he is not an earthquake – as the narrative about the Prophet Elijah also recalls today – God is the light breeze, literally it says this: He is the “thread of melodious silence” that never imposes itself, but asks to be heard (cf. 1 Kgs 19:11-13). Having faith means keeping one’s heart turned to God, to his love, to his Fatherly tenderness, amid the storm. Jesus wanted to teach this to Peter and the disciples, and also to you today. In dark moments, in sad moments he is well aware that our faith is weak – all of us are people of little faith, all of us, myself included, everyone – and that our journey can be troubled, hindered by adverse forces. But he is the Risen One! Let us not forget this: He is the Lord who passed through death and storms of life place our trust in God into crisis.

May the intercession of Mary help us to persevere in faith and fraternal love when the darkness and storms of life place our trust in God into crisis.

After the Angelus the Holy Father continued...

Dear brothers and sisters, on 6 and 9 August 1945, 75 years ago, the tragic atomic bombarding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place. While I recall the visit I made to those places last year with deep emotion and gratitude, I renew the invitation to pray and be committed to a world completely free of nuclear weapons.

These days my thoughts often turn to Lebanon. There I see a Lebanese flag, a group of Lebanese people. Last Tuesday’s catastrophe calls everyone, beginning with the Lebanese people, to cooperate for the common good of this beloved country. Lebanon has a particular identity, fruit of the encounter of different cultures that has emerged over the course of time as an example of living together. Certainly, this coexistence is now very fragile, we know this; but I am praying that, with God’s help and everyone’s genuine participation, it may be reborn free and strong. I invite the Church in Lebanon to be close to the people on their Calvary, as she has been doing these days, with solidarity and compassion, with heart and hands open to sharing. Moreover, I renew the appeal for generous aid from the international community. And please, I ask Lebanon’s bishops, priests and religious to be close to the people and to live a lifestyle marked by evangelical poverty, without luxury, because your people are suffering, suffering a great deal.

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from various countries – there are many flags here – families, parish groups, associations. In particular, I greet the youth from Pianengo, in the Diocese of Crema — there you are… loud! — who have undertaken the Via Francigena from Viterbo to Rome. Well done, congratulations!

I offer a cordial greeting to the participants in the Tour de Pologne, there are many Polish people here! – the international cycling race whose challenge this year is in memory of Saint John Paul II on the centenary of his birth.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! Arrivederci!
The Holy Father’s prayer for the world thirsting for hope

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

When man set foot on the moon, he uttered a phrase that became famous: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”. In essence, humanity had reached a historical goal. But today, in Mary’s Assumption into Heaven, we celebrate an infinitely greater conquest. Our Lady stepped foot in paradise: she went there not only in spirit, but with her body as well, with all of herself. This step of the lowly Virgin of Nazareth was the huge leap forward for humanity. Going to the moon serves us little if we do not live as brothers and sisters on Earth. But that one of us does not, instead, do we allow our bodies to vanish into nothing. With God, God does not allow our bodies to vanish into nothing. With God, all of us arise again in the glory of God. With God, our bodies are lowly, with those who do not have this possibility, especially the sick, the young people of Catholic Associations. In particular, I greet the young people of Catholic Action of San Girolamo in Trieste.

I wish a happy Feast of the Assumption to all of you who are present here, to those who are on holiday, and to those who do not have this possibility, especially the sick, those who are alone and those who ensure indispensable services to us all.

Today it would be a beautiful gesture to visit a Shrine to venerate Our Lady. Those who live in Rome and pilgrims from various countries families, parish groups, associations. In particular, I greet the young people of Catholic Action of San Girolamo in Trieste.

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And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and see you tomorrow!

Our Lady does not, because she is the Mother of hope. This title of hers has been recently included in the Litany of Loreto. Let us invoke her intercession for all the situations in the world that are most in need of hope: hope for peace, for justice, for a dignified life. Pope Francis’ prayer was raised at the end of the Angelus on the Solemnity of the Assumption, recited at midday on Saturday, 15 August, with the faithful present in Saint Peter’s Square — respecting safety measures adopted due to the pandemic — and with those who followed via media. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s reflection, which he shared in Italian.

Francis entrusts to the Virgin Mary the suffering of Nigeria and the difficult negotiations regarding the Nile

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Do not forget families struggling
due to the pandemic

The Pope’s appeal at the end of the Marian prayer

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

This Sunday’s Gospel (cf. Mt 15:21-28) describes the meeting between Jesus and the Canaanite woman. Jesus is north of Galilee, in foreign territory. The woman was not Jewish, she was Canaan-ite. Jesus is there to spend some time with his disciples away from the crowds, from the crowds whose numbers are always growing. And behold, a woman approached him seeking help for her sick daughter: “Have mercy on me, O Lord!” (v. 22). It is the cry that is born out of a life marked by suffering, from the sense of helplessness of a mother who sees her daughter tormented by evil and she [the mother] cannot heal her. Jesus initially ignores her, but this mother insists; she insists, even when the Master says to the disciples that his mission is directed only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (v. 24) and not to Gentiles. She continues to beg him, and at that point, he puts her to the test, citing a proverb. This seems almost a bit cruel: “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (v. 26). And right away, the woman, quick, anguished, responds: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from your master’s table” (v. 27).

And with these words, that mother shows that she has perceived the goodness of the Most High God present in Jesus who is open to any of his creatures’ necessities. And this wisdom, filled with trust, touches Jesus’ heart and provokes words of admiration: “O Woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire” (v. 28). What type of faith is great? Great faith is that which brings its own story, marked even by wounds, and brings it to the Lord’s feet asking him to heal them, to give them meaning.

Each of us has their own story and it is not always a clean story. Often it is a difficult story, with a lot of pain, many misfortunes and many sins. What do I do with my story? Do I hide it? No! We must bring it before the Lord. “Lord, if you will it, you can heal me”. This is what this woman teaches us, this wonderful mother: the courage to bring our own painful story before God, before Jesus, to touch God’s tenderness, Jesus’ tenderness. Let’s try this story, this prayer, let each one of us think of his or her own story. There are always ugly things in a story, always. Let us go to Jesus, knock on Jesus’ heart and say to him: “Lord, if you will it, you can heal me”. And we can do this if we always have the face of Jesus before us, if we understand what Christ’s heart is like, what Jesus’ heart is like: a heart that feels compassion, that bears our pains, that bears our sins, our mistakes, our failures. But it is a heart that loves us like that, as we are, without make-up: He loves us like that. “Lord, if you will it, you can heal me”. This is why it is necessary to understand Jesus, to be familiar with Jesus. I always go back to the advice that I gave you: always carry a small pocket-size Gospel and read a passage every day. There you will find Jesus as he is, as he presents himself; you will find Jesus who loves us, who loves us a lot, who tremendously wants our well-being. Let us remember the prayer: “Lord, if you will it, you can heal me”. A beautiful prayer. Carry the Gospel: in your purse, in your pocket and even on your mobile phone, to look at. May the Lord help us, all of us, to pray this beautiful prayer, that a pagan woman teaches us: not a Christian woman, not a Jewish woman, a pagan woman.

May the Virgin Mary intercede with her prayer so that the joy of faith may grow in every baptized person as well as the desire to communicate it through a consistent witness of life, that she give us the courage to approach Jesus and to say to Him: “Lord, if you will it, you can heal me”.

Do not forget families struggling due to the pandemic

After the Angelus, the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, I continue to pray for Lebanon, and for other dramatic situations in the world that are causing people to suffer. My thought goes also to dear Belarus. I am following attentively the post-electoral situation in that nation and I call for dialogue, the rejection of violence and respect for justice and the law. I entrust all Belarusians to the protection of the Our Lady, Queen of Peace.

I affectionately greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet the Brazilian men and women religious present here in Rome – with so many flags – these religious are spiritually following the First National Week of Consecrated Life that is being celebrated in Brazil. Happy week of consecrated life. Keep going forward. I extend my greeting also to the courageous young people of the Immaculate!

These days are days of vacation: it can be a time to restore the body, but also the spirit through moments dedicated to prayer, to silence and to relaxing time spent among the beauty of nature, God’s gift. This should not allow us to forget the problems there are due to Covid: many families do not have work, or have lost their jobs, and have nothing to eat. Works of charity and drawing near to these families should also accompany our summer break.

I wish all of you a blessed Sunday. Enjoy your lunch! And please, do not forget to pray for me. Arrivederci!