

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicum suum Non praevalent*

Forty-seventh year, number 1 (2327)

Vatican City

Friday, 3 January 2014

Pope Francis' homily at the Mass on the World Day of Peace, 1 January

A place for everyone



In the sorrowing heart of Mary there is room for all men, be they bad or good. Pope Francis said this in his homily at the Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, which he celebrated in the St Peter's Basilica on Wednesday, 1 January, on the occasion of the 47th World Day of Peace. The following is an English translation of the Pope's homily.

In the first reading we find the ancient prayer of blessing which God gave to Moses to hand on to Aaron and his sons: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Num 6:24-25). There is no more meaningful time than the beginning of a new year to hear these words of blessing: they will accompany our journey through the year opening up before us. They are words of strength, courage and hope. Not an illusory hope, based on frail human promises, or a naïve hope which presumes that the future will be better simply because it is the future. Rather, it is a hope that has its foundation precisely in God's blessing, a blessing which contains the greatest message of good wishes there can be; and this is the message which the Church brings to each of us, filled with the Lord's loving care and providential help.

The message of hope contained in this blessing was fully realized in a woman, Mary, who was destined to become the Mother of God, and it was fulfilled in her before all creatures.

The Mother of God. This is the first and most important title of Our Lady. It refers to a quality, a role which the faith of the Christian people, in its tender and genuine devotion to our heavenly Mother, has understood from the beginning.

We recall that great moment in the history of the ancient Church, the Council of Ephesus, in which the divine motherhood of the Virgin Mary was authoritatively defined. The truth of her divine maternity found an echo in Rome where, a little later, the Basilica of St Mary Major was built, the first Marian shrine in Rome and in the entire West, in which the image of the Mother of God – the *Theotokos* – is venerated under the title of *Salus Populi Romani*. It is said that the residents of Ephesus used to gather at the gates of the basilica where the bishops were meeting

An unpublished text by
Jorge Mario Bergoglio

The story of a vocation

For the anniversary of Pope Francis' Baptism we are publishing the letter which he dedicated to the Salesian priest who baptized him on Christmas Day.

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The Pontiff's Christmas message to Rome and to the world

Peace is an art



As 2013 drew to a close, Pope Francis reviewed some of the most dramatic pages of the year before invoking the gift of peace upon the city of Rome and the world. Peace, he said, is the fruit of united commitment of all people, without distinction.

In his first *Urbi et Orbi* message on 25 December, the Pope reminded everyone that peace "is not a balance of opposing forces", nor is it "a lovely façade which conceals conflicts and divisions". Peace calls for daily commitment; and making peace requires that all men be united in building this work of art.

He said: "peace is an art" for it must be fashioned and forged by men's hands, hands "warmed by the tenderness of God". We must seek out his embrace which gives us peace and strength.

The previous day at Holy Mass on Christmas Eve, Pope Francis renewed his invitation to walk together to illumine man's future with the light of God. However walking together, as the Pontiff clearly noted, does not mean being transformed into a people who go astray. Rather, it means going to Jesus in order that he might lead us into the Promised Land.

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Greetings to the Roman Curia

Professionalism, service, holiness



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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 19 December

Archbishop Adriano Bernardini, titular Archbishop of Faleri, Apostolic Nuncio to Italy and to the Republic of San Marino

Archbishop Bernardito C. Auza, titular Archbishop of Suacia, Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti

Abbot Edmund D. Power, OSB, Abbot of St Paul Outside-the-Walls, Rome

H.E. Mr Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, with his wife and entourage

Friday 20 December 2013

Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, titular Archbishop of Montemarano, Apostolic Nuncio to India and to Nepal

Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, Prelate of Loreto, Pontifical Delegate for the Sanctuary of Loreto

H.E. Mr James K. Bebaako-Mensah, Ambassador of Ghana, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Prof. Ilaria Morali

Saturday, 21 December

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

Monday, 23 December

Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of Congregation for the Eastern Churches

Cardinal Crescenio Sepe, Archbishop of Naples, with a group for the presentation of the crib for St Peter's Square

Bishop Javier Echevarría Rodríguez, titular Bishop of Cilibia, Prelate of the Personal Prelature of Opus Dei

Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, titular Archbishop of Agropoli, Apostolic Nuncio

H.E. Mr Rodney Alejandro López, Ambassador of Cuba, for the

presentation of his Letters of Credence

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Robert Peter Deeley as Bishop of Portland, USA. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Kearney and Auxiliary of Boston (18 Dec.).

Bishop Deeley, 67, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. He was ordained a priest on 14 July 1973. He was ordained a bishop on 4 January 2013 subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Kearney and Auxiliary of Boston.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Juan Horacio Suárez of Gregorio de Laferrere, Argentina. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (19 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Gabriel Bernardo Barba as Bishop of Gregorio de Laferrere, Argentina.

Until now he has been Vicar General of the Diocese of Merlo-Moreno, Argentina (19 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Barba, 49, was born in Morón, Argentina. He holds a licence canon law. He was ordained a priest on 12 August 1989. He has served in parish ministry and as secretary of the episcopal vicariate of youth, as chancellor of the diocesan Curia, as a member of the College of Consultors and of Presbyteral Council, as instructor of the diocesan Judicial Commission and of Priestly Causes, as director of the School for Deacons, as head of formation for permanent deacons, vice-president of the diocese's Caritas, as pro-vicar general, as professor of canon law at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Jean-Marc Aveline as Auxiliary Bishop of Marseilles, France, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Simidicca. Until now he has been Vicar General of the said Archdiocese (19 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Aveline, 54, was born in Sidi Bel Abbès, Algeria. He holds licences in theology and in philosophy, as well as a doctorate in theology. He was ordained a priest on 3 November 1984. He has served as professor of theology and director of studies at the Interdiocesan Seminary in Marseilles, as head of the Service diocésain des vocations, as diocesan delegate for seminarians, as director of the Institut Saint-Jean, which later became the Institut Catholique de la Méditerranée linked to the Theology Department

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Credentials of the Ambassador of Ghana



On Friday morning, 20 December, the Pope received H.E. Mr James K. Bebaako-Mensah, Ghana's first resident Ambassador to the Holy See, for the presentation of his Letters of the Credence.

H.E. Mr James K. Bebaako-Mensah, 71, is married and has 5 children. He holds a degree in political science and a post graduate diploma in public administration, as well as a certificate in civil service. He has served as: administrative officer of the districts of Cape Coast (1966-67), Winneba (1967-72) and Keta (1972-74); as principal assistant secretary at the Ministry of Transportation and of Communications (1974-78); acting principal secretary and then principal secretary at the Ministry of Local Government and Co-operatives (1978-80); official of the Northern Regional Administration (1980-87); official of the Volta Regional Administration (1987-91); acting chief director at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (1991-93); chief director at the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (1993-97); cabinet secretary of the President of the Republic (1997-2001); secretary to the President of the Republic (2009-13).

Credentials of the Ambassador of Korea



On Monday morning, 16 December, the Pope received H.E. Francesco Kyung-suk Kim, Ambassador of Korea, for the presentation of his Letters thereby accrediting him to the Holy See.

H.E. Mr Francesco Kyung-suk Kim, 65, is married with two daughters. He holds degrees in Italian language and literature and in political science and diplomacy, an MA in public administration, a specialization in law and economics in the European Community, and a doctorate in economic research. He has served as an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1984); first secretary in Rome (1984-94); director of foreign missions at the Office of Ceremonies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-96); counsellor in Rome (1996-2001); deputy director general for cultural affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-03); senior research officer of the Department of European and African Studies at the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003-04); minister in Rome (2004-05); ambassador in Quito (2005-08); research fellow at Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan (2012-13).

Assad writes a message to Pope Francis

A delegation from the government of Syria was received on Saturday morning, 28 December, by Archbishop Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States. This announcement was made by Fr Federico Lombardi, Director of the Holy See Press Office. The delegation – which included Joseph Sweid, Minister of State, and Hussam Eddin Aala, Assistant Minister and Director for Europe from the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the current Syrian ambassador to the Holy See – brought a message from President Assad to the Holy Father and explained the position of the Syrian government.

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WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH
Unicuique suum Non praevalebunt

00120 Vatican City
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http://www.osservatoreromano.va

Tipografia Vaticana Editrice «L'Osservatore Romano»

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Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
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Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 75,00; Europe: € 100,00 - US\$ 148,00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 160,00 - US\$ 260,00 - E. 88,00; Oceania, North America: € 160,00 - US\$ 240,00 - E. 130,00.
Management Office: phone +39066899480, fax +390668983675, e-mail subscriptions@ossrom.va.
For India: The weekly English Edition of L'Osservatore Romano is published and distributed in India by Carmel International Publishing House, Cotton Hill, Trivandrum- 695 014, Kerala-India; phone: +91472327255, fax: +91472328199, e-mail: ciph@md.vsnl.net.in.
For North America: L'Osservatore Romano (USPS 066-416) is published fifty times per year (weekly, except third week in August and last week in December) by Our Sunday Visitor, L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46730. Periodicals Postage Pending at Huntington, IN, and additional mailing offices, USA - phone: 800-348-2440 ext. 237; fax: 866-891-7330 - e-mail: osssales@ossrom.com.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46730

The Holy Father presides at the Te Deum on the final day of the year

Making Rome a more beautiful city in the new year

Making Rome a more beautiful city by making it a more welcoming and caring. This was the invitation Pope Francis issued at St Peter's Basilica on the last day of the year, Tuesday evening, 31 December, as he presided at First Vespers of the Solemnity of Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God, the chanting of the Te Deum and Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily at Vespers, which was delivered in Italian.

The Apostle John describes the present time in a precise way: "It is the last hour" (1 Jn 2:18). This statement – which recurs in the Mass of 31 December – means that with God's coming into history we are already in the "last" times, after which the final phase will be of the second and definitive Coming of Christ. Of course here we are speaking about the *quality* of time, not about *quantity*. With Jesus the "fullness" of the time, the fullness of meaning and the fullness of salvation has come. And there will be no new revelation but rather the full manifestation of what Jesus has already revealed. In this sense we are at the "last hour"; each and every moment of our lives is not temporary, it is permanent, and our every action is charged with eternity. In fact, the response we give today to God, who loves us in Jesus Christ, bears upon our future.

The biblical and Christian vision of time and history is not cyclical but linear: it is a journey that moves toward completion. A year which has passed, then, does not lead us to a reality which ends but to a reality which is being fulfilled, it is a further step toward the destination that awaits us: a destination of hope and a destination of happiness, for we shall encounter God, who is the reason for our hope and the source of our happiness.

As 2013 draws to a close, we gather up, as in a basket, the days, weeks and months we have lived in order to offer them all to the Lord. And let us courageously ask ourselves: how have we lived the time which He has given us? Have we used it primarily for ourselves, for our own interests, or have we also sought to spend it on others? How much time have we reserved for being with God, in prayer, in silence, in adoration?

And then we think, we citizens of Rome, we think about this City of Rome. What happened this year? What is happening, and what will happen? What is the quality of life in this City? It depends on all of us! What is the quality of our "citizenship"? This year, have we contributed in our own "small" way to making it more liveable, orderly, welcoming? In effect, the face of a city is like a mosaic whose tesserae are all those who live there. Certainly, those who are invested with authority have greater responsibility, but each one of us is co-responsible, for better or for worse.

Rome is a city of unique beauty. Its spiritual and cultural heritage is

extraordinary. Yet even in Rome there are so many people marked by material and moral poverty, poor, unhappy, suffering people who challenge the conscience of every citizen. Perhaps in Rome we feel this contrast more strongly because of the contrast between the majestic scene and wealth of artistic beauty, and the social unrest of those who are struggling the most. Rome is a city full of tourists, but also full of refugees. Rome is full of people who work, but also of people who cannot find work or perform underpaid and

sometimes undignified work, and everyone has the right to be treated equally with an attitude of acceptance and fairness, because everyone is a bearer of human dignity.

It is the last day of the year. What shall we do, how shall we act in the coming year in order to make our City a little better? In the new year, Rome will have an even more beautiful face if it is richer in humanity, more hospitable and welcoming; if we are all considerate and generous to those in difficulty; if we cooperate with a constructive and caring spirit

for the good of all. Rome in the new year will be better if people do not observe it as "from afar", on a postcard, if they do not only watch life pass by "from the balcony" without becoming involved in the many human problems, in the problems of men and women, who in the end... and from the beginning, whether we like it or not, are our brothers and sisters. From this perspective, the Church of Rome feels committed to making its own contribution to the life and future of the City – it is its duty! It feels committed and inspired by the leaven of the Gospel to be a sign and instrument of God's mercy.

This evening let us conclude the Year of the Lord 2013 by giving thanks and also by asking for forgiveness. The two together: giving thanks and asking for forgiveness. Let us give thanks for all the blessings which God has bestowed on us, especially for his patience and his faithfulness, which are manifest over the course of time, but in a singular way in the fullness of time, when "God sent forth his Son, born of woman" (Gal 4:4). May the Mother of God, in whose name tomorrow we begin a new phase of our earthly pilgrimage, teach us to welcome God made man, so that every year, every month, every day may be filled with his eternal Love. So be it!



After Vespers the Bishop of Rome visited the crib in St Peter's Square and spent a few minutes in quiet prayer there

Homily on 1 January

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and shout, "Mother of God!" The faithful, by asking them to officially define this title of Our Lady, showed that they acknowledged her divine motherhood. Theirs was the spontaneous and sincere reaction of children who know their Mother well, for they love her with immense tenderness. But it is more: it is the *sensus fidei* of the holy People of God which, in its unity, never errs.

Mary has always been present in the hearts, the piety and above all the pilgrimage of faith of the Christian people. "The Church journeys through time... and on this journey she proceeds along the path already trodden by the Virgin Mary" (*Redemptoris Mater*, 2). Our journey of faith is the same as that of Mary, and so we feel that she is particularly close to us. As far as faith, the hinge of the Christian life, is concerned, the Mother of God shared our condition. She had to take the same path as ourselves, a path which is sometimes difficult and obscure. She had to advance in the "pilgrimage of faith" (*Lumen Gentium*, 58).

Our pilgrimage of faith has been inseparably linked to Mary ever since Jesus, dying on the Cross, gave her to us as our Mother, saying: "Behold your Mother!" (Jn 19:27). These words serve as a testament, bequeathing to the world a Mother. From that moment on, the Mother of God also became our Mother! When the faith of the disciples was most tested by difficulties and uncertainties, Jesus entrusted them to Mary, who was the first to believe, and whose faith would never fail. The "woman" became our Mother when she lost her divine Son. Her sorrowing heart was enlarged to make room for all men and women, all, whether good or bad, and she loves them as she loved Jesus. The woman who at the wedding at Cana in Galilee gave

her faith-filled cooperation so that the wonders of God could be displayed in the world, at Calvary kept alive the flame of faith in the resurrection of her Son, and she communicates this with maternal affection to each and every person. Mary becomes in this way a source of hope and true joy!

The Mother of the Redeemer goes before us and continually strengthens us in faith, in our vocation and in our mission. By her example of humility and openness to God's will she helps us to transmit our faith in a joyful proclamation of the Gospel to all, without reservation. In this way our mission will be fruitful, because it is modeled on the motherhood of Mary. To her let us entrust our journey of faith, the desires of our heart, our needs

and the needs of the whole world, especially of those who hunger and thirst for justice and peace, and for God. Let us then together invoke her, and I invite you to invoke her three times, following the example of those brothers and sisters of Ephesus: Mother of God! Mother of God! Mother of God! Amen.

Silent prayer at St Mary Major

On Sunday afternoon, following Mass and the Angelus Pope Francis went to the Basilica of St Mary Major to pray in the chapel of *Salus populi romani*. There, on the World Day of Peace, he entrusted the hopes of all to the Holy Mother of God and renewed his prayer to Our Lady of Peace. His private visit lasted around 20 minutes. This was Pope Francis' seventh trip to the Marian Basilica of Rome. He went there for the first time on 14 March 2013, the day after he was elected Pope.

An unpublished text by Jorge Mario Bergoglio

The story of a vocation

The profile of the Salesian Father Enrique Pozzoli who baptized him on Christmas Day

Pope Francis has often spoken effectively about the importance of Baptism, and on several occasions he has asked the faithful if they can remember the day on which they became a Christian. Jorge Mario Bergoglio retains a vivid memory of the Italian Salesian Enrique Pozzoli, who baptized him on 25 December 1936, as it is intimately tied to his vocation. On 20 October 1990, in Córdoba, the Jesuit typed out a detailed, six-page letter setting down his memories of Pozzoli, to fulfil a promise he had made to Salesian

Cayetano Bruno, a historian of the Church in Argentina. It was the 29th anniversary of Pozzoli's death, and that morning – after having celebrated Mass for him – Fr Bergoglio sat down to write a long spontaneous letter. He immediately followed it up with another five-page letter to the same recipient with some of his "Salesian memories". On this, the anniversary of the Pope's Baptism, we publish, almost in its entirety, the first "account" dedicated to the religious in which "the images of the missionary, confess-

or, watchmaker and photographer" intersect and his story becomes intertwined, on more than one occasion decisively, with that of the Bergoglio family, as well as many others. The text, which up to now has been kept in the historical archives of the Salesians in Buenos Aires, is printed here in our translation, which has sought to preserve all the particularities and rare slips contained in the original. A few comments have been inserted in italics and between parenthesis. (g.m.v.)

2. Fr Pozzoli was very close to the Sivori family, mama's family, who lived on Quintino Bocayuva 556. Mama's brothers, especially the eldest, Vincent, were very close to him (he also had photography as a hobby). Mama's brothers were also part of the Círculos Católicos de Obreros (I think on Bergrano street). Papa had arrived from Italy on 25 January 1929. He was from Piedmont (born in Asti) and there he had lived mainly in Turin (on Via Garibaldi and Corso Valdocco). As he lived close to the Salesian Church he used to go see the Fathers there, so that when he arrived – as a qualified accountant by trade [*sic*] – he already belonged to the "Salesian family" [*sic*]. They disembarked from the "Julius Caesar", though they should have sailed on an earlier voyage: with the "Princess Malfada", which sank. You cannot imagine how many times I have thanked divine Providence! Papa worked at the Bank of Italy in Torino and Asti. Nonna, Doña Rosa Margarita Vasallo de Bergoglio (the woman who had the greatest influence on my life) worked with the newly founded Catholic Action: she lectured all over (I had one until recently, published in a leaflet, which she held in San Severo di Asti on the theme: *St Joseph in the life of the maiden, the widow and the bride*). It seems that my grandmother said things that did not suit the policy ... Once they closed the hall where she



Fr. Enrique Pozzoli

the Salesians in Solis Lane, and it was there that he met Fr Pozzoli who immediately (1929) became his confessor. He joined the group of young men that had gathered around Fr Pozzoli, here he met Mama's brothers... and through them Mama, whom he married on 12 December 1935 in San Carlos. Papa told many stories about Fr Pozzoli and the other Fathers: I remember him telling several about Fr Carlos Scandroglio, when he accompanied him to assist the dying. Papa's name was Mario José Francisco, and my grandfather's Juan Angel.

3. Then came the Economic Recession. The President of the Firm, my grandfather's brother (his name was Juan – like my grandfather – but his second name was Lorenzo) became ill with leukemia and lymphosarcoma. Dr Ivanisevich (who subsequently became the Minister of Education) took care of him but he died. The two events – the recession and the death of Juan Lorenzo – caused the business to fail. They had to sell everything, even their chapel in the cemetery (the four floor "Bergoglio Building"

where the four brothers lived, still stands in Paraná), and my grandparents and Papa were left with nothing. I mention this because it was Fr Pozzoli who introduced them to a person who lent them 2,000 pesos, which my grandparents used to buy a store in the Flores quartier... and Papa – who had been an accountant [*sic*] at the Bank of Italy and the business' accountant – took deliveries around. This shows Fr Pozzoli's concern for "his" boys, when they were going through difficult situations.

4. I remember when, at the end of 1948, Fr. Pozzoli intervened so that I and my second brother might enter – in 1949 – as boarders at the Colegio Wilfrid Barón de los Santos Angeles in Ramón Mejía. There I completed sixth grade, in 1949, and my brother fifth and sixth in 1949-1950. Then in February of 1948, it happened that Mama had her last child (my sister, the fifth and last) and she was exhausted. It was necessary that the three eldest become boarders (my sister, the third, today the mother of a Jesuit and of a woman religious, was placed as a boarder at María Auxiliadora. Here, too, Fr Pozzoli intervened). As a family we always turned to him whenever there was a problem, or when we needed help or advice. He baptised us all, except my second brother because (in January-February 1938) Fr Pozzoli was in Usuahia. Several times during the year (generally for Sant'Enrico) he came to lunch at Quintino Bacayuva 556, the home of my maternal grandparents (Francisco Sivori e María Gogna de Sivori), and we would all get together there and celebrate with ravioli: he was the spiritual Father of the family. (...)

6. In 1955 he played a decisive role in the story of my vocation. On 21 September 1954 I got thrown from a horse. I met Fr Carlos B. Duarte Ibarra in Flores (my parish). I went to confession to him by chance... and there – and without sitting at the tax desk like the saint of the day [*Matthew*] – the Lord was awaiting me "miserando et eligendo". Then and there I had no doubts that I should become a priest. I felt my vocation for the first

time at Ramos Mejía, during the sixth grade, and I spoke about it with the famous "fisherman" of vocations, Fr Martínez SDB. But then I began secondary school and "good-bye"! I was studying Chemistry at the Scientific School of Industry and I used to pass long periods of time (especially in the summer) at my maternal grandparents' home on Quintino Bocayuva Calle.

Strangely enough, I usually did not go to confession with Fr Pozzoli, but I confessed with some of the "giants" of the confessional: Fr Montaldo (doubly a giant), Fr Punto, Fr Carlos Scandroglio (even though I was a little afraid of him). But in September of 1954 Troy burned and I began a serious spiritual direction with Fr Duarte Ibarra, who passed away the following year in the military hospital assisted by Fr Aristi, a Sacramento. I didn't say anything



Then and there I had no doubts that I should become a priest. I felt my vocation for the first time at Ramos Mejía, during the sixth grade

was to speak, and so she spoke out on the street, standing on a table. She knew Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati [*sic*], and she worked with Professor Prospera Gianassa (who had considerable influence on Catholic Action in Italy). But I don't think that the political situation was the reason for emigrating to Argentina (she didn't even have to take caster oil). One of my grandfather's brothers had already put roots down

at home until November 1955: that year I was qualifying at the Industrial School (it was a six year program) and I enrolled for technical chemistry. At home they were doubtful. They were practicing Catholics... but they wanted me to wait for some years while studying at the University. Since I knew how the conflict would end, I went to Fr Pozzoli and told him everything. He examined my vocation. He told me to pray and to leave everything in God's hands. He gave me the blessing of Mary Help of Christians. Every time I recite *Sub tuum praesidium*... I think of him. Naturally at



With his parents Regina and Mario

home the idea came up: why not talk to Fr Pozzoli? And I, with the best face in the world, said "yes". I can still remember the scene. It was 12 December 1955. Papa and Mama were celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary. The celebration was a Mass (only my parents and the five children) in the San José di Flores parish. Fr Pozzoli was to celebrate it. Once the Mass had ended, Papa invited him to breakfast at the "Pearl of Flores" pastry shop (Rivera Indarte and Rivadavia, half a block from the Basilica)... Papa thought that Fr Pozzoli would not accept because he asked him if he could (I think that otherwise we would have gone home, six blocks away), but Fr Pozzoli (who knew what the topic of discussion would be) accepted without hesitation. What freedom of spirit and readiness to help a vocation! Halfway through breakfast the subject was raised. Fr Pozzoli said that University was a good thing but that things should be undertaken when God wants them to be undertaken... and he began recounting various vocation stories (without taking sides), and at the end he told the story of his own vocation. He told us how a priest had suggested that he become a priest, how in just a few short years he had become a subdeacon, then deacon and priest... how he had been given what he had not expected.... Well, at this point "finally" my parents' hearts had melted. Naturally Fr Pozzoli didn't end by telling them to let me enter seminary nor did he demand a decision from them... He simply knew that he had to "soften" them... and the rest took care of itself. It was just like him: "una de cal y otra de arena" the Spanish would say ["lime and sand", which is equivalent to the English "the carrot and stick approach"]. One didn't know his intention... but he did; and generally he didn't want to reach the point where one would recognize that "he had won". When he "whiffed" that he was about to get what he wanted, he withdrew before the others realized it. Then the decision came on its own, freely from those with whom he was speaking. They didn't feel forced... but he had prepared their hearts. He had sown, and well... but he left the enjoyment of the harvest to others.

7. I entered the Seminary in 1956. In August 1957 I contracted pneumonia. I was about to die. Then they operated on my lung. Fr Pozzoli visited me during my illness. During the second year at the Seminary a religious vocation had matured in me. And so once I was better in November, I didn't return to the Seminary and I wanted to enter the Society. I talked about it with Fr Pozzoli, he examined my vocation and gave the green light. I made regular visits to Fr Pozzoli and to the Chapel of Mary, Help of Christians. But Fr Pozzoli was concerned about the time I would have to spend at home until March when I would enter the Novitiate. He didn't like so much time out... even less so during the holidays. I don't know how he did it, but he spoke with the

Inspector and arranged for me to spend the holidays with the clerics in Tandil. Fr Grosso was the Director. At Tandil I met good clerics... One of them was Fr Wenceslao Maldonado... In March I entered the Novitiate.

8. There are two moments in my relationship with Fr Pozzoli that make me sad when I think of them. One was Papa's death, on 24 September 1961. Fr Pozzoli came to the wake and wanted to take a photo of Papa with his five children.... I was "ashamed" and I arranged for it not to happen. I think that Fr Pozzoli was aware of my attitude, but he didn't say anything. And to think that in less than one month he would be dead... The second occasion was his death. A few days before I visited him in the Hospital Italiano. And he was sleeping. I didn't let them wake him (I really was upset, and I didn't know what to say to him). I left the room and stayed talking with a Father who was there. A short while after another Father came out of the room and said that Fr Pozzoli had awoken, that he told him about my visit and he had asked that, if I was still there, I come in. I told him to tell him that I'd already left. I don't know what came over me, if it was shyness or something else.... I was 25 years old and in the first year of philosophy.... But I assure you, Fr Bruno, that if I could "redo" that moment I would. How many times have I experienced deep pain and regret for my "lie" to Fr Pozzoli when he was about to die. It was one of those moments in life (few, perhaps) that one would like to be able to live over again in order to behave differently. (...)

10. What mark did Fr Pozzoli leave? First of all I refer to my fam-

ily experience. If in my family today we seriously live out the Christian life it is thanks to him. He knew how to plant and make the foundation of Catholic life grow. There are vocations: my cousin Julio Picchi; my nephew José Luis (Jesuit) and my niece María Inés (Handmaid of the Sacred Heart): both my sister's children; me.... And among my other nieces and nephews, who are younger there is vocational unrest. Furthermore, we five siblings have a life of faith, and this faith was cultivated by Fr Pozzoli through the advice and direction he gave my parents. When the five of us get together, the discussion always turns to Fr Pozzoli; he is a point of reference we carry within us, and my nephews and nieces (none of whom have met him) know who Fr Pozzoli is. He knew how to strengthen faith and piety in that group of young people whom he helped in their Christian life. He gave great importance to devotion to Mary, Help of Christians. And to St Joseph. (...) In short: he was a labourer for the Kingdom of God.

11. Well, Father Bruno, I will end here. I feel that today I have only done my duty. At my age one begins to accept that life "shows you where credit is due", i.e. that it points out the people who have helped you to live, to grow, to be a Christian, a priest, a religious... And in recognizing the good that so many people have done me each day, I savour more and more the joy of being grateful. This is precisely what happens to me with Fr Pozzoli. Every day (*sic*) I remember him in the divine office when I pray for the faithful departed... And believe me that I do indeed rejoice with this feeling of gratitude which the Lord grants me.

A Christmas reflection

The model of paternal love

PHILIP WHITMORE

As you know, the Holy Father has asked all of us to reflect deeply on the place of marriage and family life in the Church and in society. So it's good to take time to ponder the example given to us by St Joseph, husband of Mary and guardian of the Infant Jesus.

Some people might say: theirs was hardly a typical family. Mary and Joseph lived in total continence, and Joseph was not the biological father of the child Jesus. So why does the Church place the Holy Family before us as a model of family life? Yet the more we reflect on the life of the Holy Family, and particularly the figure of St Joseph, the more we can learn about the virtues that sustain family life.

We're so accustomed to the Christmas story that we can easily forget the shock, the pain and the sense of betrayal that Joseph must have felt on learning that Mary was with child. Plenty of men in his situation would have reacted violently. And let us take the opportunity to remember and pray for all the women throughout the world who suffer from domestic violence

and who have no one to turn to for help. But Joseph did not react in that way. He even chose to spare Mary the public shame that would have been hers if he'd pursued the matter in the courts, as he was entitled to do. He put his own feelings aside, he decided to forgo his rights as a supposedly injured party, and instead he set out to do for Mary what would be best for her.

And that turned out to be something quite unexpected, something that was revealed to Joseph in a dream. He must have been in the habit of listening to God's word, his heart must have been attuned to recognizing the Lord's voice, or else he would have been unable to receive or understand that startling message – that he should take Mary as his wife, because the child in her womb was conceived of the Holy Spirit and was none other than the Saviour that the people of Israel so longed for, the Saviour promised by the prophets, the Saviour destined to free the people from their sins.

In a world where so many suffer from the absence of a father, the absence of a benevolent male figure to watch over and provide for

them, Joseph is a model of paternal love. He was the one chosen to nurture the infant Jesus, God's incarnate Son, and to offer him the fatherly guidance and love that moulded his humanity. Joseph was the one chosen to protect from harm the precious but vulnerable child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. We pray for all children, especially those who lack the support of a loving father, and all who are victims of violence, abuse or neglect. We ask St Joseph to intercede for us, for all husbands and fathers, and for all who exercise paternity, including the spiritual paternity that is the hallmark of the priestly vocation. And I'd like to invite all of you to pray especially for the students here and for seminarians everywhere, who are responding to the wonderful call to live out that spiritual fatherhood for which St Joseph gives us such an inspiring example. St Joseph, Husband of Mary, Guardian of the Infant Jesus, Patron and Protector of the Church, pray for us.

**Rector of the Venerable English College, Rome*

Pope Francis' Christmas greetings

How to work in the Curia

Professionalism, service, holiness and little gossip



Professionalism, service, holiness and "conscientious objection to gossip". These are the "hallmarks of the curial official, and even more of curial superiors". Pope Francis gave the traditional Christmas greeting to his collaborators who he received on Saturday morning, 21 December. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's address to the Roman Curia.

Your Eminences,
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,
Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am very grateful to the Cardinal Dean for his words. Thank you!

The Lord has enabled us to journey through Advent, and all too quickly we have come to these final days before Christmas. They are days marked by a unique spiritual climate made up of emotions, memories and signs, both liturgical and otherwise, such as the creche... It is in this climate that this traditional meeting takes place with you, the Superiors and Officials of the Roman Curia, who cooperate daily in the service of the Church. I greet all of you with affection. Allow me to extend a special greeting to Archbishop Pietro Parolin, who recently began his service as Secretary of State, and who needs our prayers!

While our hearts are full of gratitude to God, who so loved us that he gave us his only-begotten Son, it is also good to make room for gratitude to one another. In this, my first Christmas as the Bishop of Rome, I also feel the need to offer sincere thanks to all of you as a community of service, and to each of you individually. I thank you for the work which you do each day: for the care, diligence and creativity which you display; and for your effort – I know it is not always easy – to work together in the office, both to listen to and challenge one another, and to bring out the best in all your different personalities and gifts, in a spirit of mutual respect.

In a particular way, I want to express my gratitude to those now concluding their service and approaching retirement. As priests and bishops, we know full well that we never really retire, but we do leave the office, and rightly so, not least to devote ourselves a little more fully to prayer and the care of souls, starting with our own! So a very special and heartfelt "thank you"

goes to those of you who have worked here for so many years with immense dedication, hidden from the eyes of the world. This is something truly admirable. I have such high regard for these "Monsignori" who are cut from the same mould as the *curiales* of olden times, exemplary persons... We need them today, too! People who work with competence, precision and self-sacrifice in the fulfilment of their daily duties. Here I would like to mention some of them by name, as a way of expressing my esteem and my gratitude, but we know that, in any list, the first names people notice are the ones that are missing! Besides, I would also risk overlooking someone and thus committing an injustice and a lack of charity. But I want to say to these brothers of ours that they offer a very important witness in the Church's journey through history.

They are also an example, and their example and their witness make me think of two hallmarks of the curial official, and even more of curial superiors, which I would like to emphasize: professionalism and service.

Professionalism, by which I mean competence, study, keeping abreast of things... This is a basic requisite for working in the Curia. Naturally, professionalism is something which develops, and is in part acquired; but I think that, precisely for it to develop and to be acquired, there has to be a good foundation from the outset.

The second hallmark is service: service to the Pope and to the bishops, to the universal Church and to the particular Churches. In the Roman Curia, one learns – in a special way, "one breathes in" – this twofold aspect of the Church, this interplay of the universal and the particular. I think that this is one of the finest experiences of those who live and work in Rome: "to sense" the Church in this way. When professionalism is lacking, there is a slow drift downwards towards mediocrity. Dossiers become full of trite and lifeless information, and incapable of opening up lofty perspectives. Then too, when the attitude is no longer one of service to the particular Churches and their bishops, the structure of the Curia turns into a ponderous, bureaucratic customs-

house, constantly inspecting and questioning, hindering the working of the Holy Spirit and the growth of God's people.

To these two qualities of professionalism and service, I would also like to add a third, which is holiness of life. We know very well that, in the hierarchy of values, this is the most important. Indeed, it is basic for the quality of our work, our service. Here I would like to say that in the Roman Curia there have been, and still are, saints. I have said this publicly on more than one occasion, as a way of thanking the Lord. Holiness means a life immersed in the Spirit, a heart open to God, constant prayer, deep humility and fraternal charity in our relationships with our fellow workers. It also means apostleship, discreet and faithful pastoral service, zealously carried out in direct contact with God's people. For priests, this is indispensable.

Holiness, in the Curia, also means conscientious objection. Yes, conscientious objection to gossip! We rightfully insist on the importance of conscientious objection, but perhaps we too need to exercise it as a means of defending ourselves from an unwritten law of our surroundings, which unfortunately is that of gossip. So let us all be conscientious objectors; and mind you, I am not simply preaching! For gossip is harmful to people, harmful to our work and our surroundings.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us feel close to one another on this final stretch of the road to Bethlehem. We would do well to meditate on St Joseph, who was so silent yet so necessary at the side of Our Lady. Let us think about him and his loving concern for his Spouse and for the Baby Jesus. This can tell us a lot about our own service to the Church! So let us experience this Christmas in spiritual closeness to St Joseph. This will benefit all of us!

I thank you most heartily for your work and especially for your prayers. Truly I feel "borne aloft" by your prayers and I ask you to continue to support me in this way. I too remember you before the Lord, and I impart my blessing as I offer my best wishes for a Christmas filled with light and peace for each of you and for all your dear ones. Happy Christmas!

The model of St Joseph

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Conciliar renewal and Paul VI formed the basis of the address which the Bishop of Rome – almost from "the ends of the earth" – delivered to the Roman Curia in answer to the Cardinal Deacon's Christmas greeting on behalf of the entire Curia. At the conclusion of an exceptional year, a papal succession without precedent, he visibly demonstrated the vitality of the Church in her attention the signs of the times.

Unlike Montini, who had more than thirty years of experience in the Curia, and a privileged one as Secretary of State, the current Successor was a religious and bishop chiefly in his own homeland, with increasing and important responsibility within the lively Latin American Episcopate and in the progressive collegial maturation which the Council intended for the Church.

Two very different types of experience, but with a point of convergence, so much so that in his Christmas address Pope Francis recalled the words of Paul VI to the Roman Curia on 21 September 1963, exactly three months after his election by the Conclave and on the eve of the Council resuming its work: "The duty to be authentically Christian is here extremely challenging". And again, in another address which will always be memorable and hold true: "Every moment, every aspect of our life has an influence around us, which may be beneficial, if we are faithful to what Christ wants of us; or evil, if we are unfaithful". Thus, Montini outlined the model organism by comparing it to the lamp set on the candelabrum of the Gospel.

Taking up what he had said to the journalists on the flight to Brazil, the Bishop of Rome again evoked "the *curiales* of olden times, exemplary persons" who "offer a very important witness in the Church's journey through history". The need for an exemplary curial body that renews itself each day: a Curia *semper reformanda* one might say, by keeping in mind the criteria set by the Bishop of Rome, who on this account too, announced he wished to establish a Council of eight cardinals just one month after his election to the Chair of Peter.

Professionalism and service are the criteria set forth precisely, demanding: "competence, study, keeping abreast of things" first, "service to the Pope and to the Bishops, to the universal Church and to the particular Churches", second. If these are lacking, "the structure of the Curia turns into a ponderous, bureaucratic customhouse, constantly inspecting and questioning, hindering the working of the Holy Spirit and the growth of the people of God".

However, everything rests on holiness of life, which is no stranger to the world of the Curia

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Appeal at the Angelus

A home for every family

At the Angelus on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, 22 December, Pope Francis called the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square to contemplate the selflessness of St Joseph in the days leading up to Christmas. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Gospel tells us about the events preceding the birth of Jesus, and the Evangelist Matthew presents them from the point of view of St Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary.

Joseph and Mary were dwelling in Nazareth; they were not yet living together, because they were not yet married. In the meantime, Mary, after having welcomed the Angel's announcement, came to be with child by the power of the Holy Spirit. When Joseph realized this, he was bewildered. The Gospel does not explain what his thoughts were, but it does tell us the essential: he seeks to do the will of God and is ready for the most radical renunciation. Rather than defending himself and asserting his rights, Joseph chooses what for him is an enormous sacrifice. And the Gospel tells us: "Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly" (1:19).

This brief sentence reveals a true inner drama if we think about the love that Joseph had for Mary! But even in these circumstances, Joseph



intends to do the will of God and decides, surely with great sorrow, to send Mary away quietly. We need to meditate on these words in order to understand the great trial that Joseph had to endure in the days preceding Jesus' birth. It was a trial similar to the sacrifice of Abraham, when God asked him for his son Isaac (cf. Gen 22): to give up what was most precious, the person most beloved.

But as in the case of Abraham, the Lord intervenes: he found the faith he was looking for and he opens up a different path, a path of love and of happiness. "Joseph," he says, "do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:20).

This Gospel passage reveals to us the greatness of St Joseph's heart and soul. He was following a good plan for his life, but God was reserving another plan for him, a

greater mission. Joseph was a man who always listened to the voice of God, he was deeply sensitive to his secret will, he was a man attentive to the messages that came to him from the depths of his heart and from on high. He did not persist in following his own plan for his life, he did not allow bitterness to poison his soul; rather, he was ready to make himself available to the news that, in a such a bewildering way, was being presented to him. And thus, he was a good man. He did not hate, and he did not allow bitterness to poison his soul. Yet how many times does hatred, or even dislike and bitterness poison our souls! And this is harmful. Never allow it: he is an example of this. And Joseph thereby became even freer and greater. By accepting himself according to God's design, Joseph fully finds himself, beyond himself. His freedom to renounce even what is his, the possession of his very life, and his full interior availability to the will of God challenge us and show us the way.

Let us make ourselves ready to celebrate Christmas by contemplating Mary and Joseph: Mary, the woman full of grace who had the courage to entrust herself totally to the Word of God; Joseph, the faithful and just man who chose to believe the Lord rather than listen to the voices of doubt and human pride. With them, let us walk together toward Bethlehem.

After the Angelus, the Pope said:

I read there, in large print: "The poor cannot wait". It is beautiful! And this makes me think of Jesus born in a stable, he was not born in a home. Afterwards he had to flee,

to go to Egypt to save his life. Then he returned to his home in Nazareth. And I think today, also in reading what is written there, of the many families who do not have a home, either because they never had one or because they lost it for any number of reasons. Family and home go together. It is very difficult to bring up a family without living in a house. This Christmastide, I invite everyone – persons, social institutions, authorities – to do everything possible so that every family might have a home.

I greet all of you affectionately, dear pilgrims who have come from various countries in order to participate in this meeting of prayer. My thoughts turn to families, parish groups, associations and individual faithful. In particular, I greet the community of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, the musical group of San Giovanni Valdarno, children from the parish of San Francesco Nuovo in Rieti, and participants in the relay who departed from Alexandria and have come here in Rome to bear witness to their commitment to foster peace in Somalia.

To those from Italy who are gathered together today to manifest their social commitment, I wish to express my hope that they may make a constructive contribution by rejecting any temptation to confrontation and violence, and by always following the path of dialogue in defending their rights.

I wish you all a good Sunday and a Christmas of hope, of justice and of brotherhood. Have a good lunch and goodbye!

Crib in St Peter's Square presented to the Pope



This year's nativity crib for St Peter's Square was presented to the Pope on Monday morning, 23 December, by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Archbishop of Napoli. He was accompanied by several representatives of the archdiocese, as well as from the artisan workshop Cantone & Costabile and the construction firm. Also present were Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, Bishop Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, Msgr Paolo Nicolini and Fr Rafael García de la Serrana Villalobos.

The Holy Father meets the little patients of Rome's pediatric hospital Bambino Gesù

A basket of dreams and prayers

Young patients in Rome's Bambino Gesù hospital placed their dreams in a basket, and gave it to Pope Francis when he came to visit them on Saturday afternoon, 21 December. They were dreams of a future the children hope will be different, and they offered them to the Pope in order that he might transform them into prayer. Pope Francis thanked the children for their trust, and surrounded by the little patients in the hospital chapel, he said a few words to the children and invited them to pray together with him. "Let us present them together to Jesus", he said. "He knows them better

than anyone; He knows what is deepest in our hearts". Although the Holy Father's words to the group of children were brief, his visit lasted a full three hours. He spent the remainder of the time visiting each of the children, spending a few moments alone with them and their parents and their doctors. Thus, he quietly and personally shared in the suffering that these little ones are called to carry. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words to the little children in the chapel, which were delivered in Italian.

Dear children,

I thank you for your dreams and prayers which you have collected in this basket and given to me. Thank you very much! Let us present them together to Jesus: He knows them better than anyone; He knows what is deepest in our hearts. Especially with you children, Jesus has a special bond, he is always close to you. Now, let us recite together a prayer to Our Lady before this beautiful statue: Our Lady with Jesus.

Hail Mary...

May the Almighty God bless you...

Thank you very much!



The Pope's Urbi et Orbi message

Peace is an art

Pope Francis gave his first Urbi et Orbi message to the world on Christmas Day, Wednesday, 25 December 2013, from the Vatican Basilica's Central Loggia. He looked back on some of the most dramatic pages of 2013 and he asked everyone to contribute in their own way to building peace. The Pope asked for prayers particularly for the people of Syria, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. He commented on the situation in the Middle East, especially that of Iraq, where only a few hours before a brutal attack had taken place. Pope Francis

also made special mention of refugees, the marginalized and all those in need of friendship and support. The Holy Father's message was met with a long applause from more than 70,000 faithful who had gathered in St Peter's Square. The Bishop of Rome was accompanied by Cardinal-Deacons Jean-Louis Tauran and Giuseppe Bertello. The Swiss Guards and the Italian Army lined the front of St Peter's Basilica as their respective bands performed various hymns. The following is the English text of the Pope's Urbi et Orbi message.

not spare the innocent and defenseless. Bless the land where you chose to come into the world, and grant a favourable outcome to the peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians. Heal the wounds of the beloved country of Iraq, once more struck by frequent acts of violence.

Lord of life, protect all who are persecuted for your name. Grant hope and consolation to the displaced and refugees, especially in the Horn of Africa and in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Grant that migrants in search of a dignified life may find acceptance and assistance. May tragedies like those we have witnessed this year, with so many deaths at Lampedusa, never occur again!

Child of Bethlehem, touch the hearts of all those engaged in human trafficking, that they may realize the gravity of this crime against humanity. Look upon the many children who are kidnapped, wounded and killed in armed conflicts, and all those who are robbed of their childhood and forced to become soldiers.

Lord of heaven and earth, look upon our planet, frequently exploited by human greed and rapacity. Help and protect all the victims of natural disasters, especially the beloved people of the Philippines, gravely affected by the recent typhoon.

Dear brothers and sisters, today, in this world, in this humanity, is born the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Let us pause before the Child of Bethlehem. Let us allow our hearts to be touched, let us not fear this. Let us not fear that our hearts be moved. We need this! Let us allow ourselves to be warmed by the tenderness of God; we need his caress. God's caresses do not harm us. They give us peace and strength. We need his caresses. God is full of love: to him be praise and glory forever! God is peace: let us ask him to help us to be peacemakers each day, in our life, in our families, in our cities and nations, in the whole world. Let us allow ourselves to be moved by God's goodness.

After the Holy Father's "Urbi et Orbi" blessing, he said the following:

To you, dear brothers and sisters, gathered from throughout the world in this Square, and to all those from different countries who join us through the communications media, I offer my cordial best wishes for a merry Christmas!

On this day illumined by the Gospel hope which springs from the humble stable of Bethlehem, I invoke the Christmas gift of joy and peace upon all: upon children and the elderly, upon young people and families, the poor and the marginalized. May Jesus, who was born for us, console all those afflicted by illness and suffering; may he sustain those who devote themselves to serving our brothers and sisters who are most in need. Happy Christmas to all!

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours" (Lk 2:14)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Rome and throughout the whole world, Greetings and Happy Christmas!

I take up the song of the angels who appeared to the shepherds in Bethlehem on the night when Jesus was born. It is a song which unites heaven and earth, giving praise and glory to heaven, and the promise of peace to earth and all its people.

I ask everyone to share in this song: it is a song for every man or woman who keeps watch through the night, who hopes for a better world, who cares for others while humbly seeking to do his or her duty.

Glory to God!

Above all else, this is what Christmas bids us to do: give glory to God, for he is good, he is faithful, he is merciful. Today I voice my hope that everyone will come to know the true face of God, the Father who has given us Jesus. My hope is that everyone will feel God's closeness, live in his presence, love him and adore him.

May each of us give glory to God above all by our lives, by lives spent for love of him and of all our brothers and sisters.

Peace to mankind

True peace – we know this well – is not a balance of opposing forces. It is not a lovely "façade" which conceals conflicts and divisions. Peace calls for daily commitment, but making peace is an art, starting from God's gift, from the grace which he has given us in Jesus Christ.

Looking at the Child in the manger, Child of peace, our thoughts turn to those children who are the most vulnerable victims of wars, but we think too of the elderly, the battered women, to the sick... Wars shatter and hurt so many lives!

Too many lives have been shattered in recent times by the conflict in Syria, fueling hatred and vengeance. Let us continue to ask the Lord to spare the beloved Syrian people further suffering, and to enable the parties in conflict to put an end to all violence and guarantee access to humanitarian aid. We have seen how powerful prayer is! And I am happy today too, that the followers of different religious confessions are joining us in our prayer for peace in Syria. Let us never lose the courage of prayer! The courage to say: Lord, grant your peace to Syria and to the whole world. And I also invite non-believers to desire peace with that yearning that makes the heart grow: all united, either by prayer or by desire. But all of us, for peace.

Grant peace, dear Child, to the Central African Republic, often forgotten and overlooked. Yet you, Lord, for

get no one! And you also want to bring peace to that land, torn apart by a spiral of violence and poverty, where so many people are homeless, lacking water, food and the bare necessities of life. Foster social harmony in South Sudan, where current tensions have already caused too many victims and



are threatening peaceful coexistence in that young state.

Prince of Peace, in every place turn hearts aside from violence and inspire them to lay down arms and undertake the path of dialogue. Look upon Nigeria, rent by constant attacks which do



Christmas Eve Mass in St Peter's Basilica

The mystery of walking and seeing

The poor, sick, marginalized and persecuted were the focus of Pope Francis' homily at his first Christmas Mass, celebrated on 24 December in St Peter's Basilica. He addressed words of hope and encouragement to them throughout the course of the celebration, which began at 9:30 pm. The rosary was recited in preparation for the Mass, and the deacon sang the Kalenda – the solemn proclamation of the Saviour's birth. The Basilica's bells rang out as the Gloria was intoned. The Pope wished to for the first time place the statue of the Child Jesus before the Altar of the Confession. At the end of the Mass he

carried the statue in procession down the aisle, and placed it in the Nativity crib in the Basilica. Accompanying him were ten children between the ages of five and ten from the Philippines, Lebanon, the Congo, Argentina and Italy. Thirty-two cardinals were present, including Cardinal-Dean Angelo Sodano; 40 archbishops and bishops, among them were Archbishop Parolin, Secretary of State, and Archbishop Krajewski, the Vatican Almoner. About 300 priests concelebrated the Mass and distributed Holy Communion to the many faithful who could not find place in the Basilica but who were

following the Liturgy on giant screens in St Peter's Square. Among those present were Msgr Xuereb, Msgr Pedacchio Leaviz, as well as Archbishop Gänswein, Prefect of the Pontifical Household. Accompanying the diplomatic corps were Archbishop Becau, Substitute Secretary of State, Archbishop Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States; Msgr Peter Bryan Wells, Assessor; Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States; and Msgr Jose Bettencourt, Head of Protocol. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily which was delivered in Italian.

1. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Is 9:1).

This prophecy of Isaiah never ceases to touch us, especially when we hear it proclaimed in the liturgy of Christmas Night. This is not simply an emotional or sentimental matter. It moves us because it states the deep reality of what we are: a people who walk, and all around us – and within us as well – there is darkness and light. In this night, as the spirit of darkness enfolds the world, there takes place anew the event which always amazes and surprises us: the people who walk see a

great light. A light which makes us reflect on this mystery: the mystery of walking and seeing.

Walking. This verb makes us reflect on the course of history, that long journey which is the history of salvation, starting with Abraham, our father in faith, whom the Lord called one day to set out, to go forth from his country towards the land which he would show him. From that time on, our identity as believers has been that of a people making its pilgrim way towards the promised land. This history has always been accompanied by the Lord! He is

ever faithful to his covenant and to his promises. Because he is faithful, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). Yet on the part of the people there are times of both light and darkness, fidelity and infidelity, obedience, and rebellion; times of being a pilgrim people and times of being a people adrift.

In our personal history too, there are both bright and dark moments, lights and shadows. If we love God and our brothers and sisters, we walk in the light; but if our heart is closed, if we are dominated by pride, deceit, self-seeking, then darkness falls within us and around us. "Whoever hates his brother – writes the Apostle John – is in the darkness; he walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 Jn 2:11). A people who walk, but as a pilgrim people who do not want to go astray.

2. On this night, like a burst of brilliant light, there rings out the proclamation of the Apostle: "God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race" (Tt 2:11).

The grace which was revealed in our world is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, true man and true God. He has entered our history; he has shared our journey. He came to free us from darkness and to grant us light. In him was revealed the grace, the mercy, and the tender love of the Father: Jesus is Love incarnate. He is not simply a teacher of wisdom, he is not an ideal for which

we strive while knowing that we are hopelessly distant from it. He is the meaning of life and history, who has pitched his tent in our midst.

3. The shepherds were the first to see this "tent", to receive the news of Jesus' birth. They were the first because they were among the last, the outcast. And they were the first because they were awake, keeping watch in the night, guarding their flocks. The pilgrim is bound by duty to keep watch and the shepherds did just that. Together with them, let us pause before the Child, let us pause in silence. Together with them, let us thank the Lord for having given Jesus to us, and with them let us raise from the depths of our hearts the praises of his fidelity: We bless you, Lord God most high, who lowered yourself for our sake. You are immense, and you made yourself small; you are rich and you made yourself poor; you are all-powerful and you made yourself vulnerable.

On this night let us share the joy of the Gospel: God loves us, he so loves us that he gave us his Son to be our brother, to be light in our darkness. To us the Lord repeats: "Do not be afraid!" (Lk 2:10). As the angels said to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid!". And I also repeat to all of you: Do not be afraid! Our Father is patient, he loves us, he gives us Jesus to guide us on the way which leads to the promised land. Jesus is the light who brightens the darkness. He is mercy: our Father always forgives us. He is our peace. Amen.



Pope Francis and Benedict XVI exchange Christmas greetings



Pope Francis and Pope emeritus Benedict XVI had lunch together on Friday 27 December, at the Domus Sanctae Marthae. Pope Francis had invited his Predecessor to dine with him during their Christmas visit on Monday, 23 December. Their respective Secretaries, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States, and Msgr Peter Bryan Wells, Assessor for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, were also present at the lunch.

Their meeting on Monday lasted 45 minutes. Benedict XVI welcomed Pope Francis at the entrance of his residence. After a moment of prayer together in the chapel they met privately. Then Pope Francis, accompanied by his Secretaries, also greeted members of Benedict XVI's family.

Pope Francis' call to the faithful during the Angelus on the Feast of St Stephen

Freedom for believers

On Thursday, 26 December, the Feast of St Stephen, the Pope called for prayers for all Christians, who are the victims of violence and discrimination. Before praying the Angelus the Holy Father addressed the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning.

You aren't afraid of the rain, you are very good!

The liturgy extends the Solemnity of Christmas for eight days: a time of joy for the entire People of God! And on this second day of the octave, the Feast of St Stephen, the first martyr of the Church, is inserted into the joy of Christmas. The book of the Acts of the Apostles presents him to us as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (6:5), chosen with six others for the service of widows and the poor in the first Community of Jerusalem. And it tells us about his martyrdom, when after a fiery dispute that aroused the anger of the members of the Sanhedrin, he was dragged outside the city walls and stoned. Stephen dies like Jesus, asking pardon for those who killed him (7:55-60).

In the joyful atmosphere of Christmas, this commemoration may seem out of place. For Christmas is

the celebration of life and it fills us with sentiments of serenity and peace. Why disturb the charm with the memory of such atrocious violence? In reality, from the perspective of faith, the Feast of St Stephen is in full harmony with the deeper meaning of Christmas. In martyrdom, in fact, violence is conquered by love, death by life. The Church sees in the sacrifice of the martyrs their "birth into heaven". Therefore, today we celebrate the "birth" of Stephen, which in its depths springs from the Birth of Christ. Jesus transforms the death of those who love him into a dawn of new life!

In the martyrdom of Stephen the same confrontation between good and evil, between hatred and forgiveness, between meekness and violence, which culminated in the Cross of Christ. Thus, the remembrance of the first martyr immediately dispels a false image of Christmas: the fairytale, sugarcoated image, which is not in the Gospel! The liturgy brings us back to the authentic meaning of the Incarnation, by linking Bethlehem to Calvary and by reminding us that the divine salvation involved the battle against sin, it passes through the narrow door of the Cross. This is the path which Jesus clearly indicated to his disciples, as today's Gospel attests: "You will be hated by all for my



name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 10:22).

Therefore today we pray especially for the Christians who are discriminated against on account of the witness they bear to Christ and to the Gospel. Let us remain close to these brothers and sisters who, like St Stephen, are unjustly accused and made the objects of various kinds of violence. Unfortunately, I am sure they are more numerous today than in the early days of the Church. There are so many! This occurs especially where religious freedom is still not guaranteed or fully realized. However, it also happens in countries and areas where on paper freedom and human rights are protected, but where in fact believers, and especially Christians, face restrictions and discrimination. I would like to ask you to take a moment in silence to pray for these brothers and sisters [...] and let us entrust them to Our Lady (*Hail Mary...*). This comes as no surprise to a Christian, for Jesus foretold it as a propitious occasion

to bear witness. Still, on a civil level, injustice must be denounced and eliminated.

May Mary Queen of Martyrs help us to live Christmas with the ardor of faith and love which shone forth in St Stephen and in all of the martyrs of the Church.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father said the following.

I greet families, parish groups, associations and individual faithful who come from Rome, from Italy and from every part of the world. May these days of rest near the Crib where we admire Mary and Joseph close by the Child arouse in everyone a generous commitment to mutual love, so that within families and the various communities an atmosphere of understanding and fraternity, which so benefits the common good, may come alive.

I wish you a blessed celebration of Christmas and a good lunch! Goodbye!

To Italian diplomatic personnel

The value of the unseen

Sentiments of gratitude and appreciation for precious work that often go unnoticed were expressed by Pope Francis to diplomatic personnel from the Republic of Italy and the Italian Embassy to the Holy See. The audience took place on Friday morning, 20 December, in the Clementine Hall. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were given in Italian.

Mr Master of Ceremonies,
Mr Ambassador,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially greet you and I thank you for your visit, which the Christmas atmosphere makes all the more pleasant.

First I wish to express my appreciation for all the help which you lend to my ministry by your work, especially the hidden work that goes unnoticed but which is so very valuable. You truly have my heartfelt thanks!

Take last 19 March, for example: it is difficult to imagine all the diplomatic activity that went into that great event. And so today serves as a propitious occasion to thank you, and also to tell you that I am very pleased with what I just heard: regarding your collaboration with the Secretariat of State and with the



Prefecture of the Papal Household; and also regarding the ethical and spiritual dimension that you cultivate in all that you do.

Regarding the value and meaning of your work, allow me to emphasize a perspective which I think is very important. Through your service, you are in a position to promote the *culture of encounter*. You are diplomatic officials, and all of your work aims at ensuring that representatives from nations, international organizations and institutions come together in the most profitable way. How important this service is! The more visible, ceremonial aspect of your work is

ordered to the unseen, to the growth of positive relations based on mutual understanding, respect and the common search for paths of development and peace.

Here in particular you have a further card to play: that of the Italian cultural heritage.

Throughout the world, Italy has always been synonymous with culture, art, civilization. And you contribute to ensuring that this be esteemed within a culture of encounter, that this heritage contribute to the common good, to what Paul VI called the civilization of love.

Christmas, which is fast approaching, is the celebration of the encounter between God and man. A Child who fully realizes this encounter in his person is given to us. Even those who are not Christians feel summoned by the message of Jesus' Birth. May each one of you be able to experience this mystery of love intensely, and may it also deeply inspire your service.

Above all, may the Lord bestow great peace and serenity upon your families, children, the elderly and those who are sick. I thank you again and I ask you to please pray for me. I wish you a Happy Christmas!

Rome challenges Canterbury to cricket match

The Church of England has agreed to bat against the Vatican in a cricket match. As the UK's *Catholic Herald* recently reported, the match is scheduled to take place in September 2014, likely at Lord's cricket ground. The announcement was made at a 20 December press conference hosted by Archbishop David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative in Rome.

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, formally wrote to Archbishop Welby in early December requesting his consent to the match.

The "St Peter's Cricket Club" team members will be made up of priests and seminarians drawn from various colleges in Rome and Vatican offices. To ensure a level playing field, the Church of England side will be made up of ordinands and those associated with theological colleges. John McCarthy, Australia's ambassador to the Holy See who spearheaded the Vatican side, said he was "thrilled" with the Archbishop of Canterbury's "generous response". "We now have a whole new game that is part of the cricketing calendar," he said. "One of my Christmas wishes has been achieved - seeing this game come about."

At the Angelus on 29 December the Pontiff recites a prayer for the Holy Family

With refugees and exiles

Pope Francis spoke about Joseph, Mary and Jesus' experience as refugees at the Angelus in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 29 December. He also recalled the millions of families today who flee their homeland searching for a dignified life. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

On this first Sunday after Christmas, the Liturgy invites us to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Indeed, every nativity scene shows us Jesus together with Our Lady and St Joseph in the grotto of Bethlehem. God wanted to be born into a human family, he wanted to have a mother and father like us.

And today the Gospel presents the Holy Family to us on the sorrowful road of exile, seeking refuge in Egypt. Joseph, Mary and Jesus experienced the tragic fate of refugees, which is marked by fear, uncertainty and unease (cf. Mt 2:13-15; 19-23). Unfortunately, in our own time, millions of families can identify with this sad reality. Almost every day the television and papers carry news of refugees fleeing from hunger, war and other grave dangers, in search of security and a dignified life for themselves and for their families.

In distant lands, even when they find work, refugees and immigrants do not always find a true welcome, respect and appreciation for the values they bring. Their legitimate expectations collide with complex and difficult situations which at times seem insurmountable. Therefore, as we fix our gaze on the Holy Family of Nazareth as they were forced to become refugees, let us think of the tragedy of those migrants and refugees who are victims of rejection and exploitation, who are victims of human trafficking and of slave labour. But let us also think of the other "exiles": I would call them "hidden exiles", those exiles who can be found within their own families: the elderly for example who are sometimes treated as a burdensome presence. I often think that a good indicator for knowing how a family is doing is seeing how their children and elderly are treated.

Jesus wanted to belong to a family who experienced these hardships, so that no one would feel excluded from the loving closeness of God. The flight into Egypt caused by Herod's threat shows us that God is present where man is in danger, where man is suffering, where he is fleeing, where he experiences rejection and abandonment; but God is also present where man dreams, where he hopes to return in freedom to his homeland and plans and chooses life for his family and dignity for himself and his loved ones.

Today our gaze on the Holy Family lets us also be drawn into the simplicity of the life they led in Nazareth. It is an example that does our families great good, helping



them increasingly to become communities of love and reconciliation, in which tenderness, mutual help, and mutual forgiveness is experienced. Let us remember the three key words for living in peace and joy in the family: "may I", "thank you" and "sorry". In our family, when we are not intrusive and ask "may I", in our family when we are not selfish and learn to say "thank you", and when in a family one realizes he has done something wrong and knows how to say "sorry", in that family there is peace and joy. Let us remember these three words. Can we repeat them all together: may I, thank you, sorry. (Everyone: may I, thank you, sorry!) I would also like to encourage families to become aware of the importance they have in the Church and in society. The proclamation of the Gospel, in fact, first passes through the family to reach the various spheres of daily life.

Let us fervently call upon Mary Most Holy, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, and St Joseph her spouse. Let us ask them to enlighten, comfort and guide every family

in the world, so that they may fulfil with dignity and peace the mission which God has entrusted to them.

After the Angelus the Pope said:

Dear brothers and sisters, the upcoming Consistory and Synod of Bishops will address the topic of the family, and the preparatory phase already began some time ago. Therefore today, on the Feast of the Holy Family, I wish to entrust the synod's work to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, by praying for families throughout the world. I invite you to join me spiritually in prayer as I recite.

Then the Pope recited the prayer he had composed for the family.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love, to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may the approaching Synod of Bishops make us once more mindful

of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.

After the prayer, he greeted those watching St Peter's Square live and celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family:

I offer a special greeting to the faithful who join us by video: from Nazareth, in the Basilica of the Annunciation, where the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops is present; from Barcelona, in the Basilica of the *Sagrada Família*, where the president of the Pontifical Council for the Family is present; from Loreto, in the Basilica Shrine of the Holy House. And I extend this greeting to those gathered in various parts of the world for other celebrations of the family, such as the one in Madrid.

Lastly, I greet with affection all of the pilgrims present here, especially the families! I know that there are members of the Romanian community of Rome present. I greet the young people of the Focolare Movement who have come from various countries, together with all the other young people, among whom there are groups from the Dioceses of Milan, Como, Lodi, Padua, Vicenza and Concordia-Pordenone. I greet the young people from Curno and Calcinato with their catechists; the faithful from Salcedo, Carzago Riviera, San Giovanni in Persiceto and Modica.

I wish you all a beautiful Feast of the Holy Family, a beautiful and good Sunday and a good lunch. Good bye!

Message to the Taizé Community

Europe needs youth

The following message was sent by Archbishop Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, on behalf of Pope Francis to the participants of the 36th annual Taizé Community meeting entitled "Pilgrimage of trust on earth". The meeting took place in Strasbourg, from 28 December to 1 January. The following is a translation of the message which was sent in French.

Dear Young People,
Rome remembers with joy your European meeting last year and especially the beautiful prayer that brought together thousands of young people in St Peter's Square with Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Francis feels close to you who are now gathered in Strasbourg and in the towns and villages of Alsace and Ortenau: a land torn by wars that have created countless victims, but also a land that bears a great hope, that of the building of the European family. Since it is taking

place simultaneously in two countries, your meeting is a sign. Europe, which has gone through and is still going through difficult times, needs your commitment, your faith and your courage.

You are together to "seek visible communion among all who love Christ". This is the project that you have set for yourselves for the meetings in Taizé throughout the year 2014. You are aware that the division among Christians is a formidable obstacle to the accomplishment of the mission entrusted to the Church and that "the credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 244). The Pope shares with you the conviction that we can learn so

much from each other, because the realities that unite us are many.

The Pope is counting on you so that, by means of your faith and your witness, the spirit of peace and reconciliation of the Gospel may shine forth among your contemporaries. From the bottom of his heart he extends his blessing to you, the young participants in the meeting, to the brothers of Taizé, as well as to the pastors and to all those who are welcoming you in Alsace and Ortenau.



VATICAN BULLETIN

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of Lyons. He founded and directed the Institut de sciences et de théologie des religions in Marseille and was the founding editor-in-chief of the magazine *Chemins de dialogue*, as member of the editorial board of *Questions ouvertes* of Editions de l'Atelier, as member of the editorial board of *Recherches de sciences religieuses*, and as a consultant at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Alfredo Espinoza Mateus, SDB, as Bishop of Loja, Ecuador. Until now he has been Treasurer of the Salesian Society in Ecuador (20 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Espinoza Mateus, 55, was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador. He holds a licence in the science of education and a specialization in catechesis. He was ordained a priest on 17 December 1988. He has served in various capacities in education: as administrator of various Salesian Colleges in Ecuador, as a member of the permanent commission of the National Council of Salesian Education, as a member of the Economic Council of the Polytechnic Salesian University, as director of the Provincial House in Quito, as provincial delegate of the Vocation Fund of Ecuador. He was appointed delegate of the Salesian Fathers in Ecuador to the 26th General Chapter of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco in 2008.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Aurelio José Kühn, OFM, of the Prelature of Deán Funes, Argentina. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law. He is succeeded by Bishop Gustavo Gabriel Zurbriggen, who until now has been Coadjutor Prelate of the said Prelature (21 Dec.).

Bishop Zurbriggen, 50, was born in Curupayti, Argentina. He was ordained a priest on 26 October 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 9 December 2011, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor Prelate of Deán Funes.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Wiesław Szlachetka as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Gdańsk, Poland, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Vageata. Until now he has been Parish Priest of St Polycarp in Gdańsk-Osowa and Professor at the Major Seminary (21 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Szlachetka, 54, was born in Mała Komorza, Poland. He holds a doctorate in Biblical theology. He was ordained a priest on 17 May 1986. He has served in parish ministry and as professor of Biblical theology at the Major Seminary of Gdańsk and at the Theological College of Gdańsk.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Francisco Polti Santillán of Santiago del Estero, Argentina. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (23 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Vicente Bokalic Iglic, CM, as Bishop of Santiago del Estero, Argentina. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Summa and Auxiliary of Buenos Aires (23 Dec.).

Bishop Bokalic Iglic, 61, was born in Lanús, Argentina. He was ordained a priest on 11 April 1978. He was ordained a bishop on 29 May 2010, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Summa and Auxiliary of Buenos Aires.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Guillermo Loria Garita, SS.CC., of San Isidro de El General, Costa Rica. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (24 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Gabriel Enrique Montero Umaña, OFM Conv., as Bishop of San Isidro de El General, Costa Rica. Until now he has been a member of the community of Conventual Friars in Moravia and an assistant in the Apostolic Nunciature in Costa Rica (24 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Montero Umaña, 68, was born in Moravia, Costa Rica. He holds a degree in Sacred Scripture and a master's in Franciscan studies. He made his solemn profession to his order on 24 February 1972 and he was ordained a priest on 16 August 1973. He has served in parish ministry and in Costa Rica as novice and postulant master, provincial custodian, head of postulant formation, director of Saint Francis College, and as head of formation for post-novices. He has also served as novice master in Honduras, as head of postulant formation in Africa, as assistant general in Rome for Africa, Asia and Australia, as rector of the international college of Conventual Friars, as provincial custodian in the Philippines, and as rector of the Inter-Africa House of Formation in Kenya.

NEW DIOCESE

The Holy Father established the Diocese of Sultanpet, India, by dividing the Dioceses of Coimbatore and Calicut, making it a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Verapoly (28 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Peter Abir Antonisamy from the clergy of Pondicherry and Cuddalore, as the first Bishop of Sultanpet, India. Until now he has been Director of the Emmaus Spirituality Centre, which he founded (28 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Abir Antonisamy, 62, was born in Sathipattu, India. He was ordained a priest on 1 May 1979. He holds a master's in biblical theology, in literature and history, as well as a licence and a doctorate in Sacred Scripture. He has served in parish ministry and as secretary to the Archbishop, as chancellor of the Curia, as professor of Sacred Scripture at the Good Shepherd Seminary, Coimbatore, as director of St Paul's Bible Institute, Poonamelle, as vice-secretary of Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council, as coordinator for

South Asia of the Catholic Biblical Federation, and as director of the Tamil Nadu Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre.

CAUSES OF SAINTS

On 19 December the Holy Father confirmed *donec aliter provideatur* Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

At the same time His Holiness confirmed Archbishop Marcello Bartolucci as Secretary of the said dicastery.

His Holiness also confirmed as members of the said dicastery: Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, Cardinal Agostino Vallini, Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Cardinal Paul Josef Cordes, Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Cardinal Stanisław Ryko, Cardinal Francesco Monterisi, Cardinal Kurt Koch, Cardinal Paolo Sardi, Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, CS, Cardinal Manuel Monteiro de Castro, Cardinal Santos Abril y Castelló, Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, Cardinal James Michael Harvey, Archbishop Félix del Blanco Prieto, Archbishop Fabio Bernardo D'Onorio, OSB, Archbishop Giovanni Paolo Benotto, Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, Archbishop Renato Boccardo, Bishop Lorenzo Chiarinelli, Bishop Marcello Semeraro, Bishop Lino Fumagalli, Bishop Paulino Schiavon, Bishop Antoni Stankiewicz, Bishop Gianfranco Girotti, OFM Conv, Bishop Ambrogio Spreafico, Bishop Raffaello Martinelli.

The Supreme Pontiff also confirmed as Consultors of the said dicastery: Bishop Sergio Pagano, B; Msgr Joaquín Alonso Pacheco; Fr Francesco Asti; Fr Nicola Bux; Fr Alfonso C. Chacón Oreja; Msgr Lorenzo Dattino; Fr Miguel De Salis Amaral; Fr Antonio Escudero Cabello, SDB; Fr Maurizio Pietro Faggioni, OFM; Msgr Jair Ferreira Pena; Fr Jesús Manuel García Gutiérrez, SDB; Fr Wojciech Giertych, OP; Fr François-Marie Léthel, OCD; Fr Mieczysław Lubomirski SJ; Fr Sabatino Majorano, C.SS.R; Fr Germano Marani, SJ; Msgr Guido Mazzotta; Fr Aimable Musoni, SDB; Fr Stéphane Oppes, OFM; Fr Adam Owczarski, C.SS.R.; Msgr Mario Pangallo, Fr Szczepan T. Praśkiewicz, OCD; Fr Marek Adam Rostkowski, OM; Fr Felice Ruffini, MI; Msgr Erich Schmid; Fr Zbigniew Suchecki, OFM Conv.; Fr Damian Jan Synowicz, OFM Conv.; Fr Mihály Szentmártoni, SJ; Msgr Francesco Maria Tasciotti; Fr Angelo Giuseppe Urru, OP; Fr Filippo Urso; Fr Alberto Valentini, SMM; Fr Adam Wolanin, SJ; Fr Alfonso Amaranter, C.SS.R.; Sr Albarosa Ines Bassani, SDVI; Prof. Pietro Borzomati; Fr Marcel Chappin, SJ; Msgr Luis Manuel Cuña Ramos; Fr Fidel González Fernández, MCCJ; Dr Johan Ickx; Msgr Wilhelm Imkamp; Fr Gabriele Ingegneri, OFM Cap; Fr Marek Ingłot, SJ; Fr Carlo Longo, OP; Sr Grazia Loparco, FMA; Dr Christoph Ludwig; Fr Luigi Nuovo,

CM; Prof. Ulderico Parente; Dr Gaetano Passarelli; Prof. Francesco Ricciardi Celsi; Fr Giorgio Rossi, SDB; Msgr Mario Sensi.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, titular Archbishop of Atella, as Apostolic Nuncio to Canada. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio to Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia (18 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Charles Daniel Balvo, titular Archbishop of Castello, as Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya (21 Dec.).

START OF MISSION

On 7 November Archbishop George Kocherry, titular Archbishop of Othona, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio to the People's Republic of Bangladesh with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the President H.E. Mr Abdul Hamid.

ADVENT SERMON

On Friday morning, 20 December, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the third Advent sermon in the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Ārvaldis Andrejs Brumanis, Bishop emeritus of Liepāja, Latvia, at age 87 (17 Dec.).

Bishop Francisco Manuel Vieira, Bishop emeritus of Osasco, Brazil, at age 88 (23 Dec.).

Bishop Soane Lilo Foliaki, SM, Bishop emeritus of Tonga, at age 80 (24 Dec.).

The model of St Joseph

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as oversimplification might suggest: "In the Roman Curia", Pope Francis said, "there have been, and still are, saints. I have said this publicly on more than one occasion, as a way of thanking the Lord". This is the model which is threatened by gossip which is not only harmful to people but also "harmful to our work and our surroundings".

As Advent came to a close the Bishop of Rome invited the Curia to reflect on the model set forth by a Saint he holds dear: Joseph, "who was so silent yet so necessary", necessary at the side of Mary his bride, who is the image of the Church, and of Jesus, the Child who wills to be born in every person's heart.

G.M.V.

Archbishop emeritus of Barcelona

Cardinal Ricardo María Carles Gordó dies

Cardinal Ricardo María Carles Gordó, Archbishop emeritus of Barcelona, Spain, died on Tuesday morning, 17 December, in the hospital of Tortosa at the age of 87. He was admitted to hospital on 25 November when he had a stroke. When Pope Francis learned of his death, he sent a telegram to Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, current Archbishop of Barcelona. The following is a translation from Spanish.

Having learned the sad news of the death of beloved Cardinal Ricardo María Carles Gordó, Archbishop emeritus of Barcelona, I offer fervent prayers for his eternal repose. He exercised his episcopal ministry with diligent apostolic care, first as Bishop of Tortosa and subsequently as head of this beloved Archdiocese of Barcelona, constantly dedicating himself to the evangelizing mission, with wisdom and generosity, and indefatigably taking on numerous pastoral initiatives, with

great closeness to the priests, to consecrated people and seminarians, to whom he dedicated particular attention.

In remembering the great service he offered to the Church, I wish to express my deepest condolences to you, Your Eminence, to your Auxiliary, to the presbyterate, to the religious communities and to the faithful of this particular Church, as well as to those who enjoyed the Cardinal's friendship and closeness. And I ask you to kindly convey these sentiments to the relatives of the late Cardinal. I cordially impart the comfort of an Apostolic Blessing to everyone as a sign of hope in the Risen Christ.

FRANCISCUS PP.

A similar telegram was sent by Archbishop Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State.



Ricardo María Carles Gordó was born on 24 September 1926 in Valencia, Spain. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1951 in the Diocese of Valencia. Two years later he earned a degree in canon law from the Pontifical University of Salamanca. He served as parish priest of

Tavernes de Valldigna and then of San Fernando, Valencia. He began working with youth and was a counsellor at the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, an association which the Cardinal always remembered with affection. Subsequently he was appointed director of a school for dea-

cons, episcopal delegate for the clergy and diocesan counsellor for the pastoral care of the family.

He was ordained a bishop on 3 August 1969 subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Tortosa. His aptitude for dialogue and collaboration led him to set up various organ-

izations to facilitate cooperation between the clergy and lay people. He convoked and led a diocesan Synod – the only one celebrated since the council of the dioceses of Catalonia – with the wide participation of all the parishes in Tortosa. This Synod drew up various constitutions which brought about pastoral decisions which were more evangelizing and missionary in character. In that period in the Bishops' Conference of Spain, he served on various committees, as president of the sub-committee for the family and the president of the committee for seminaries and universities.

On 23 March 1990 he was made Archbishop of Barcelona and four years later, on 26 November 1994, John Paul II created him a cardinal, with the title of Santa Maria Consolatrice al Tiburtino. During his episcopate he reorganized the Archdiocese and established various diocesan presbyteral and pastoral councils. His pastoral plan for the diocese focused on: "Identity, communion, evangelization", which was intended for non-practicing believers, non-believers, the youth, the marginalized, immigrants and families.

He retired on 15 June 2004, having served as a member of the Congregation for Catholic Education, of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, of the Council of Cardinals for the study of the organisational and economic problems of the Holy See, and of the Prefecture for the Economic Affairs of the Holy See.

The Cardinal dedicated himself passionately to the relationship between faith and culture, in fact his book *Fe y cultura* is a collection of conferences, studies and pastoral reflections on this theme. On the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination he published *Cartas desde la vida misma*, which included his articles and other pieces on current events from newspapers and radio.

His funeral was celebrated in the Cathedral of Barcelona on Thursday, 19 December, by his successor Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach.

Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Promulgation of Decrees

On Monday, 9 December, the Holy Father received in private audience Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience the Supreme Pontiff authorized the Congregation to promote the following Decrees:

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Giovannina Franchi, Foundress of the Congregation of the Nursing Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother; born in Como, Italy, on 24 June 1807 and died there on 23 February 1872;

- the martyrdom of the Servants of God Mario Vergara, professed Priest of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, and Isidoro Ngei Ko Lat, Layman and Catechist, killed in hatred of the Faith in Shadaw, Burma, (today Myanmar) on 24 May 1950;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maurice Marie Matthieu Garrigou, Priest and Founder of the Institute of Our Lady of Compassion; born in Château de Gudanes, Ariège, France, on 21 September 1766 and died in Toulouse, France, on 27 September 1852;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Clemens (in the world: Vincent Fuhl), professed Priest of the Order of St Augustine; born in Aidhausen, Germany, on 18 June 1874 and died in La Paz, Bolivia, on 31 March 1935;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Marcel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (in the world: Boldizsár Marton), professed Priest of the Order of Discalced Carmelites; born in Kiskomárom (today Zalakomár), Hungary, on 9 September 1887 and died on Budapest, Hungary, on 29 May 1966;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Romano Bottegai, professed Priest of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance or Trappists; born in San Donato di Lamon, Belluno, Italy, on 28 December 1921 and died in Beirut, Lebanon, on 19 February 1978;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Rosalie Cadron-Jetté (in religion: Mother of the Nativity), Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy; born in Lavaltrie, Montréal, Canada, on 27 January 1794 and died in Montréal on 5 April 1864;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Rosa Teresa Gay Tibau, Foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph (now known as: Women Religious of St Joseph of Girona); born in Llagostera, Girona, Spain, on 24 October 1813 and died in Girona on 18 March 1884;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Oliva of the Mystical Body (in the world: Maria Oliva Bonaldo), Foundress of the Institute of the Daughters of the Church; born in Castelfranco Veneto, Treviso, Italy, on 26 March 1893 and died in Rome on 10 July 1976;

- the heroic virtues of the Servants of God Orsola Mezzini, professed Religious and Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Mission for the Deaf; born in Campeggio di Monghidoro, Bologna, Italy on 12 December 1853 and died in Bologna on 23 March 1919;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Scolastica of Divine Providence (in the world: Orsola Maria Rivata), professed Religious and First Superior General of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master; born in Guarene, Cuneo, Italy, on 12 July 1897 and

died in Sanfrè, Cuneo on 23 March 1987;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Rafael Cordero Molina, Layman; born in San Juan de Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico, on 24 October 1790 and died there on 5 July 1868.

On Tuesday, 17 December, the Holy Father received in private audience Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience the Supreme Pontiff, having heard the address of the Prefect, extended to the Universal Church the liturgical worship of Blessed Peter Faber, professed priest of the Society of Jesus, born in Le Villaret, Haute-Savoie, France, on 13 April 1506 and died in Rome on 1 August 1546, enrolling him in the list of saints.

At the same time he authorized the Congregation to promulgate the following decrees:

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, professed Sister of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Elizabeth; born in Bayonne, New Jersey, USA, on 26 March 1901 and died in Elizabeth, New Jersey on 8 May 1927;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Manuel Herranz Establés, diocesan Priest and Founder of the female religious order of Escuelas de la Virgen Dolorosa; born in Campillo de Dueñas, Spain on 1 January 1880 and died in Madrid, Spain on 29 June 1968;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God George Ciesielski, Layman and Father of a family; born in Krakow, Poland on 12 February 1929 and died in Egypt on 9 October 1970.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Tuesday, 17 December

God's surname

At Holy Mass on Tuesday morning Pope Francis commented on the Readings of the day, taken from the Book of Genesis (49:2, 8-10) and from the Gospel of St Matthew (1:1-17). On this, the Pontiff's seventy seventh birthday, he presided at his customary morning Mass in the Chapel of Santa Marta. Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, was present to concelebrate the Mass and expressed his best wishes to the Pope on behalf of the entire College.

The Pope centred his homily around the theme of God's presence in the history of mankind. Within this context, the Pontiff identified two key themes – inheritance and genealogy. He said they are keys to interpreting the first Reading from Genesis regarding the prophecy of Jacob, who gathers together his sons and foretells a glorious line of descendants for Judah, and the Gospel passage which recounts the genealogy of Jesus. Reflecting especially on the latter, Pope Francis said that “we are not dealing with a list in a telephone book” but with “pure history”, for “God sent his Son among men. Jesus is consubstantial with God, the Father, but also consubstantial with his mother, a woman. And this is his consubstantiality with his mother: God entered history, God wanted to become history. He is with us. He has journeyed with us”.

It was a journey that began long ago, in Paradise, immediately after the original sin. God “had this idea: to make the journey with us”. Therefore, “he called Abraham, the first person indicated on this list, and he invited him to walk. Abraham began the journey: he begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah”. And so it went, over the course of history. “God journeys with his people”, the Pope said, because he did not want to come and save us apart from history; he wanted to make history with us”.

It is a history wrought of holiness and sin, the Pope said. The list of the genealogy of Jesus is filled with saints and sinners: from Abraham and David who converted after his sin to “high caliber sinners, who sinned gravely”. But God made history with them all. The latter were sinners who did not know how to respond to the design God had in mind for them. “Solomon, so great and intelligent, ended like a poor man who didn't even know his name”. And yet God was also with him. “And this is beautiful: God makes history with us”.

The Pope continued: “when God wants to say who he is, he says: I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob”. “What is God's surname?” the Pope asked. “We are, each one of us. He takes the name of each of us and makes it his surname: ‘I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Pedro, of Marietta, of Armony, of Marisa, of Simon, of everyone. He takes his



surname from us. God's surname is each one of us”.

The Pope then said, as Christmas approaches, “it is natural to think: if he made history with us, if he took his surname from us, if he has left it to us to write his history, then we for our part should allow God to write our history”.

Pope Francis concluded by extending to all those present an invitation to an open heart, and a Christmas wish: “May the Lord write your history, and may you allow him to write it”.

Thursday, 19 December

When man tries to save himself

Man cannot save himself, and those who have had the pride to try, even Christians, have failed. For only God can grant life and salvation. This was the heart of Pope Francis' homily at Holy Mass on Thursday morning at the Chapel of Santa Marta.

The Pope drew upon the Readings of the day to remind those present that “the capacity to bestow life and salvation come only from the Lord”. “Many times”, he said, “the Scriptures speak about barren women, about sterility, about the inability to conceive and give life”. And yet many times “a miracle of the Lord” occurs and “these barren women are given to have a child”.

Pope Francis pointed to the example of Samson's mother, whose story is recounted in the day's first Reading from the Book of Judges (13:2-7, 24-25a). He then recalled what happened to Sarah, the wife of our father Abraham: “she could not believe” that she could have a son at her advanced age “and she laughed behind the door of the tent where she was listening to what her husband was saying; she laughed because she could not believe it, but she had a son”.

Today's Gospel (Lk 1:5-25), the Holy Father continued, reminds us of “what happened to Elizabeth”. These biblical stories about barren women show how “life is brought forth from the impossibility of giving life”. The Pope then noted that this also occurred with women who perhaps were not barren, but who

no longer had any hope for their lives. “We think of Noemi, who ultimately had a grandchild”. Essentially, he said, “the Lord intervenes in the lives of these women to tell us: I am able to give life”.

Pope Francis then noted how the image of the desert is repeatedly used by the prophets. “The desert, arid land which is incapable of bringing forth a tree, fruit, or of making anything blossom”. And yet this very desert, he said, becomes a forest. “The prophets say: it shall be great, it will flourish!”. “The desert can flourish” and “the barren woman can give life” only through the Lord's promise: I can do it! I can bring forth life and salvation from your barrenness! I can make fruit to grow from your aridity! It is the intervention of God that makes us fruitful, that gives us the ability to give life, that helps us along the path of holiness”.

One thing is certain, the Pope said: “we cannot save ourselves by ourselves”. “Even many Christians” have tried it, but only God's intervention brings us salvation.

“What must we do for our part then?”, the Pope asked. First “we must recognize our own barrenness, our inability to bring forth life”. Then “we must ask,” saying to the Lord: “Lord, I want to be fruitful, I want my life to give life, I want my faith to be fruitful and to go forward and to give life to others. Lord, I am barren; I cannot do it, but you can. I am a desert; I cannot not do it, but you can”. This, he said, “should be our prayer in the days leading up to Christmas”.

Pope Francis then recalled how “the proud, those who believe they can do everything by themselves, are struck down”. The Pope pointed to Michal, the daughter of Saul. “She was a woman”, he said, “who was not sterile, but she was proud, and was not able to understand what it was to praise God, and in fact laughed at the praise that David gave to the Lord. And she was punished with sterility. Humility is necessary for fruitfulness. How many people like her imagine that they are just, and in the end they are poor souls”.

Humility, Pope Francis said, is what is truly important, the ability to say to the Lord: “Lord, I am barren, I am a desert”. And he concluded: “how important are the

beautiful O Antiphons that the Church has us pray over the course of these days: O Son of David, O Adonai, O Wisdom, O Root of Jesse, O Emmanuel, come and give us life, come and save us, for only You can, alone I cannot. It is with this humility, the humility of the desert, the humility of the barren soul, that we receive grace: the grace to blossom, to bear fruit and to give life”.

Friday, 20 December

Mystery doesn't seek publicity

In his homily at Holy Mass on Friday morning Pope Francis reflected on the day's Gospel from St Luke (1:26-38), which record the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary: “The power of the Most High will overshadow you. The Holy Spirit will come upon you”. The Pope noted that the angel's words harken back to the day's first Reading from the Book of Isaiah (7:10-14).

“Throughout salvation history, the overshadowing of God has always guarded mystery”, the Pontiff said. “The overshadowing of God accompanied his people in the desert” and the whole of salvation history, he said, “demonstrates that the Lord has always guarded the mystery. He veiled the mystery, he did not publicize the mystery”. In fact, the Pope added, “a mystery that promotes itself is not Christian, it is not a mystery of God”. The day's Gospel clearly confirms this, he said, for when Mary received the angel's announcement, “the mystery of her motherhood” remained hidden.

“God's overshadowing of us in our lives”, the Pope continued, helps us to “discover our own mystery: our mystery of encounter with the Lord, the mystery of our life's journey with the Lord”. In fact, he said, “each of us knows how mysteriously the Lord works in his or her heart and soul. And this is the overshadowing, the power, the Holy Spirit's style, as it were, for veiling our mystery. This overshadowing in us, in our lives, is called silence. Silence is the cloud that veils the mystery of our relationship with the Lord, of our holiness and of our sins”.

“It is a mystery that we cannot explain. But when there is no silence in our lives, we lose the mystery, it goes away”. Hence the importance “of guarding the mystery with silence: this is the cloud, this is God's power in us, it is the strength of the Holy Spirit”.

The Pope turned again to the witness of the Blessed Virgin, who lived in this silence for the whole of her life. “I think about how many times she remained silent, how many times she did not say what she felt in order to guard the mystery of her relationship with her Son”. He then recalled how “in 1964, in Nazareth, Paul VI told us all that we need to renew and strengthen, to fortify si-

Meeting with the youth of Catholic Action

Friends of Jesus

Always be Jesus' friends. Pope Francis addressed this invitation to the youth of Catholic Action whom he received in audience on Friday morning, 20 December, in the Consistory Hall. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Young People,
Good morning!

I thank you for having come to bring me Christmas wishes on behalf of ACR and the entire Italian Catholic Action, which is represented here by the adult leaders who have accompanied you. I also express my best wishes to you all, to your families, and to the entire Association.

Catholic Action for Youth is a beautiful reality which has spread and is active in almost all of the diocese of Italy. I encourage you always to be "living stones" in the Church, to build up the Church, by being united to Jesus. Catholic Action without Jesus is pointless, it becomes an NGO, and there are many of these, it doesn't work. It is something else to be living stones united to Jesus!

I heard that your journey this year was intended to help you to discover Jesus' presence as a friend in your

lives. The slogan says it well: "There is no game without you". Behold, Christmas is the feast of the presence of God, who comes among us to save us. The birth of Jesus is no fable! It is an historic event which truly occurred in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Faith enables us to recognize the Child born of the Virgin Mary, the true Son of God, who for love us us became man.

In the face of little Jesus we contemplate the face of God, who does not reveal himself in strength and power but in the weakness and frailty of a newborn babe. This is what our God is like, he comes so close, in a child. This Child reveals the faithfulness and tenderness of the unconditional love with which God surrounds each one of us. That is why we celebrate at Christmas, thus reliving what the shepherds at Bethlehem experienced. And we celebrate together with so many fathers and mothers who struggle each day, facing so many sacrifices; we celebrate together with the little ones, the sick, the poor, for it is the celebration of God's encounter with us in Jesus.

Dear young people, Jesus loves you, he wants to be your friend; he wants to be a friend to all young people! Are you convinced of this? ... is that so? It seems you are not so



convinced, no? Are you convinced or not? [The young people respond 'yes'.] Good! If you are convinced, surely you will be able to communicate the joy of this friendship everywhere: at home, in the parish, at school, with your friends ... And a question for you young people: I said "at home, in the parish, at school, with your friends". And with your enemies, with those who do not love you? What must we do? Who can tell me? What must we do? Make war? [A young man: pray for them!] That's it: pray for them! Be good to them so that they may become close to Jesus. This is what we should do: closeness, draw close. You will be able to bear witness by behaving as true Christians: ready to lend a hand to those in need. And if someone who does not love you

needs something, will you give him a hand? You aren't sure? Yes! Yes! Without judging others, without speaking ill of others are very unpleasant. Is gossip Christian or not? No! Is gossip prayer? Is gossip like praying or not? No! Gossiping is something bad. We must never do it. And we need to begin now: never gossip, never speak ill of others. Go forward in this way! So I wish you a blessed journey, always united to Jesus. I entrust you to Our Lady. I bless you together with your families, your teachers, your assistants and all the friends of Catholic Action for Youth. Merry Christmas, and pray for me! And now before receiving the blessing let us pray a *Hail Mary* to Our Lady.

Hail Mary

Mass at Santa Marta

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

lence", precisely because "silence guards the mystery".

The Pope then gave voice to "the silence of Our Lady at the foot of the Cross", as Pope John Paul II had done before him. In reality, he said, the Gospel does not report any words from Our Lady. Mary "was silent, but within her heart how many things she said to the Lord" in that crucial moment in history. Likely, Mary would have thought back to the angel's words regarding her Son: "On that day you told me he would be great! You told me he would be given the throne of David his father and that he would reign for ever! But now look there" at the Cross. Mary, Pope Francis added, "veiled in silence the mystery which she did not understand. And through silence she allowed the mystery to grow and flourish", thus bringing great hope to all.

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you". The angel's words to Mary assure us that "the Lord veils his mystery", the Pope said. For "the mystery of our relationship with God, of our journey, of our salvation should not be aired or publicized. Silence should be its guard".

Pope Francis concluded with a prayer that "the Lord might grant us all the grace to love silence, to seek it out, to have a heart guarded by the cloud of silence. Thus the mys-

tery growing within us shall bear much fruit".

Monday, 23 December

Awaiting the birth

In his homily at Holy Mass on Monday, 23 December, Pope Francis commented on the simple yet profound prayer found on the Church's lips in these days leading up to Christmas: "Come, Lord!". "In this final week before Christmas", the Pope said, "the Church repeats the prayer, 'Come, Lord!' and she calls out to the Lord with various and different names: O Wisdom, O Root of Jesse, O Dayspring, O King of the Nations, and today, O Emmanuel".

The Church calls out to the Lord in this way, the Pope explained, because "she is awaiting a birth". "This week the Church is like Mary: she is awaiting a birth". The Virgin, he said, "sensed within herself, in body and in soul", that the birth of her child was near. And he added: "surely in her heart she said to the baby she was carrying in her womb: 'Come, I want to see your face, for they have told me you will be great!'".

This Church lives this spiritually, Pope Francis continued, for "we accompany Our Lady in this journey of waiting" and "we too wish to hasten the Lord's birth". This, the Pontiff said, is the reason for the Church's prayer: "Come, O Key of

David, O Dayspring, O Wisdom, O Emmanuel". This invocation, he said, recalls the final words in the Sacred Scripture; in the last lines of the Book of Revelation, the Church cries out: "Come, Lord Jesus", Maranatha, which "may indicate a desire or a certainty: the Lord is coming".

In fact, Pope Francis continued, "the Lord comes twice". His first coming is "what we are about to commemorate, his physical birth". Then, "he will come at the end of time, at the close of history". However, the Pontiff added, "St Bernard tells us that there is a third coming of the Lord: his coming to us each day: each day, the Lord visits his Church. He visits each one of us. And our soul also enters into this likeness: our soul comes to resemble the Church; our soul comes to resemble Mary". Here Pope Francis recalled that "the Desert Fathers say that Mary, the Church and the soul are all feminine". Hence what is said of one may analogously be said of the others.

Therefore, the Pope continued, "our souls are waiting in anticipation for the coming of the Lord, open souls calling out: Come, Lord!". Over the course of these days, he said, the Holy Spirit moves in the heart of each one of us, forming this prayer within us: "come, come!". Throughout the Advent Season the Church keeps watch like Mary. And "watching is the virtue, the attitude, of pilgrims. We are pilgrims. Are we watching or are we closed? Are we

vigilant or are we safe and secure in an inn, no longer wanting to continue on? Are we pilgrims or are we wandering?"

That is why the Church invites us to pray "come!" and to "open our souls in watchfulness". We are invited to perceive and understand "what is happening within us", to ask "if the Lord comes or does not come; if there is room for the Lord, or if there is room for celebration, for shopping, for making noise". This examination of conscience, he said, should lead us to ask ourselves: "Are our souls open, as the soul of Holy Mother Church is open, and as Mary's soul was open? Or have we closed our souls and put a highly erudite note on the door saying: please do not disturb?"

"The world does not end with us" and "we are not more important than the world". Therefore, "with Our Lady and the Church we would do well today to call out: O Wisdom, O Key of David, O King of the Nations, Come, Come!" and, he added, "we would do well to repeat it many times". It is a prayer, he said, that allows us to examine if our soul communicates to others that it does not wish to be disturbed, or if instead it is "an open soul, a great soul ready to receive the Lord". A soul, the Pope concluded, "that already feels what the Church will tell us tomorrow in the Antiphon: Know that today the Lord comes and tomorrow you shall behold his glory".

At the first Angelus of the year Pope Francis urges the faithful to work for a more just society

Peace at home

"The Lord helps us all to set out more decisively on the path of justice and peace. And let us begin at home! Justice and peace at home, among ourselves. It begins at home and then goes out to all humanity". Pope Francis spoke these words to more than 100,000 faithful gathered in St Peter's Square at noon on Wednesday, 1 January. The Holy Father also thanked the President of the Republic of Italy for his best wishes for the new year. The following is a translation of Pope Francis' reflection which was given in Italian.



After the Angelus the Holy Father said:

Brothers and sisters, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Italy for the wishes which he expressed to me this evening during his message to the nation. I in turn wish to extend my heartfelt best wishes, invoking the Lord's blessing on the Italian people so that with the responsible and firm commitment of all, they may look to the future with trust and hope.

With gratitude I greet the many prayer initiatives for peace which are taking place throughout the world on the occasion of the World Day of Peace. I remember in particular the National March, which took place last night in Campobasso, organized by CEI, Caritas and Pax Christi. I greet participants in the "Peace in all lands" rally, which is being promoted in Rome and in many countries by the Sant'Egidio Community. I also greet families from the Movement of Family Love who kept vigil last night in St Peter's Square. Thank you! Thank you for this prayer.

I wish to extend my cordial greetings to all the pilgrims who are present here, to families and to groups of young people. A special thought goes to the "Carolers" – Sternsinger – the children and youth who in Germany and Austria carry Jesus' blessing to homes and take up collections for children in need. Thank you for your commitment! And I also greet the friends and volunteers of the *Fraterna Domus*.

I wish everyone a year of peace in the grace of the Lord and under the maternal protection of Mary, who today we invoke under the title "Mother of God". What do you say if we all greet her together, now, saying three times "Holy Mother of God"? All together: Holy Mother of God! Holy Mother of God! Holy Mother of God! I wish you a blessed start of the year and a good lunch. Goodbye!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning and Happy New Year!

At the beginning of the new year I wish to offer everyone my cordial best wishes for peace and all that is good. My wish is the Church's, it is Christian! It is not tied to a somewhat magical and fatalistic sense of a new cycle beginning. We know that history has a centre: Jesus Christ Incarnate, Crucified and Risen, who is alive among us; it has an end: the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of peace, justice and freedom in love; and it has a force which moves it towards that end: the force of the Holy Spirit. We all have the Holy Spirit, whom we received at Baptism, and he moves us to go forward along the path of the Christian life, along the path of history towards the Kingdom of God.

This Spirit is the power of life which made the womb of the Virgin Mary fruitful; and it is the same power which inspires the efforts and work of all builders of peace. Wherever a man or woman is a builder of peace, it is the Holy Spirit who is assisting them, moving them to make peace. Two roads intersect today: the Feast of Mary the Most Holy Mother of God and the World Day of Peace. Eight days ago the angelic proclamation rang out: "Glory to God and peace to all men". Today we welcome it anew from the Mother of Jesus, who "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19), in order to

make of it our commitment over the course of the year which has just commenced.

The theme of this World Day of Peace is "Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace". Fraternity: in the footsteps of my Predecessors, beginning with Paul VI, I developed the theme in a Message which has already been published and which today I consign to everyone. It is based on the conviction that we are all children of the one Heavenly Father, we belong to the same human family and we share a common destiny. Hence derives each person's responsibility to work so that the world might become a community of brothers and sisters who respect one another, accept one another in their differences and take care of one another. We are also called to be aware of the violence and injustices which are present in so many parts of the world to which we cannot remain indifferent and unmoved: everyone's commitment is needed in order to build a truly just and caring society. Yesterday I received a letter from a gentleman, perhaps one of you, who, in bringing a family tragedy to my attention, went on to list the many tragedies and wars that exist today in the world, and he asked me: what is happening in the heart of man which is leading him to do such things? And at the end he said: "It is time to stop". I too believe it would do us good to stop on this path of violence and seek peace. Brothers and sisters, I make

the words of this man my own: What is happening in the heart of man? What is happening in the heart of humanity? It is time to stop!

From every corner of the globe, today believers offer up their prayers asking the Lord for the gift of peace and the ability to bring it into every environment. On this first day of the year, may the Lord help us all to set out more decisively on the path of justice and peace. And let us begin at home! Justice and peace at home, among ourselves. It begins at home and then goes out to all humanity. But we have to begin at home. May the Holy Spirit act in hearts, may he melt obstacles and hardness and grant that we may be moved before the weakness of the Baby Jesus. Peace, in fact, requires the strength of meekness, the non-violent strength of truth and love.

With filial trust, let us place our hopes in the hands of Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer. To she who extends her motherhood to all mankind, let us entrust the cry for peace of peoples who are oppressed by war and violence, so that the courage of dialogue and reconciliation might prevail over temptations to revenge, tyranny and corruption. Let us ask her to grant that the Gospel of fraternity, which the Church proclaims and to which she bears witness, may speak to every conscience and bring down the walls that prevent enemies from recognizing one another as brothers.

More than 11 million followers for @Pontifex



Pope Francis' twitter account @Pontifex now has more than 11 million followers in nine languages. As of 2 January, the Spanish account numbers 4,445,644 followers, the English has 3,470,585 followers, the Italian 1,401,126 followers, the Portuguese 912,961 followers, the French 225,648 followers, the Latin account 197,029 followers, the German 164,211 and the Arabic 104,607. Pope Francis has been tweeting about Christmas and also the theme of peace: "Christ comes among us at Christmas: it is the perfect time for a personal encounter with the Lord" was his greeting on 25 December. His tweet on 26 December, the Feast of St Stephen, focused on the theme of martyrdom: "Before the Nativity scene, may we pray in a particular way for those suffering persecution for the faith". On 27 December he tweeted: "Our Mother Mary is full of beauty because she is full of grace". "Let us draw from the crib the joy and deep peace that Jesus comes to bring to the world" was his tweet on 31 December. And on 2 January 2014 he tweeted: "God does not reveal himself in strength or power, but in the weakness and fragility of a newborn babe".