

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*

Fifty-first year, number 20 (2547)

Vatican City

Friday, 18 May 2018

Pope Francis addresses the Diocese of Rome on the theme of spiritual afflictions

Listen to the cry of the people

In a meeting on Monday evening, 14 May, with representatives of various sectors of the Diocese of Rome, Pope Francis emphasized the need to “pay fearless heed to our thirst for God and to the cry that rises up from our people of Rome, asking ourselves: in what sense does this cry express a need for salvation, that is, for God?”. In the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, the Pope received a report on the work that the diocesan commission had carried out in recent months on the theme of “spiritual afflictions”, and then, after answering several questions posed by Archbishop Angelo Donatis, Vicar General of Rome, the Pontiff delivered a discourse in which he called on participants “to be enlightened by the paradigm of Exodus, which recounts precisely how the Lord chose and educated a people to unite to Himself, in order to make of them the instrument of his presence in the world”. Exodus, the Pontiff explained, “speaks of slavery, of an exit, of a passage, of a covenant, of temptation/ ‘murmuring’ and of an entrance. But it is a journey of healing”. And as such, he observed, it can guide the steps of the Church community, helping to free it from a “condition of slavery, that is, of oppressive limitations, of dependency on things that are not the Lord”.

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Mario Agnes dies, Editor-in-Chief of 'L'Osservatore Romano' from 1984 to 2007

Twenty-three years

Mario Agnes was an important yet reserved representative of Italian Catholicism. Born in the Region of Irpinia to a deeply rooted Catholic family to which he always remained extremely close, Agnes was distinguished by his absolute loyalty to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In the last 30 years of the 20th century, he exercised his lay commitment first in Catholic Action (serving, among other roles, as its national president) and then as Editor-in-Chief of *L'Osservatore Romano*, which he directed for nearly a quarter century.

With a lean, almost emaciated figure, rigorous and at times sharp in manner, his strong, impetuous character mellowed with the passing years. To those who knew him personally, however, he showed unexpected friendly attention and even solicitude.

After his lengthy leadership of the newspaper, he increasingly withdrew into his Vatican residence and was struck in recent years by a serious illness, which he faced without complaint; he felt deeply bereft at the loss of his beloved sister. However, up to his last days he continued to keep up with current events, receiving nieces, nephews and friends, but increasingly preferred brief telephone conversations.

The period that he led the Holy See newspaper was the second longest in *L'Osservatore Romano*'s history – after 40 years by Giuseppe Dalla Torre –, lasting a good 23 years under two Pontiffs: John Paul II and Benedict XVI. And although different from Pope Montini, and in profoundly changing times, Mario Agnes had traits in common with the aristocrat from Padua: commitment to the Catholic movement, loyalty to the service of the Holy See, and lastly, solid administration of the newspaper.

Transformed at the time of the Council and under the direction of Raimondo Manzini, who had been appointed by John XXIII and who, with consistent and intelligent openness, was able to interpret the decisive 15 years of



Montini, the Vatican paper was then led for over six years by the reserved and refined intellectual Valerio Volpini. To succeed him John Paul II appointed the not yet 53-year-old Agnes, who did not hesitate to address the publication's external and internal difficulties. He focused his attention above all on the transformation, even the controversial transformations, of Italian Catholicism, and pursuant to this commitment he encouraged the entry of new technologies to the paper, accepting them even without making use of them personally.

With consummate loyalty to the first non-Italian Pope after almost half a millennium,

The Pontiff's telegram

Mario Agnes, emeritus Editor-in-Chief of 'L'Osservatore Romano', passed away on Wednesday evening, 9 May, at his home in the Vatican. Appointed by Pope John Paul II in 1984, he led the Holy See's newspaper for nearly a quarter century. The following is a translation of a telegram that Pope Francis sent to the late Editor's nephew, Salvatore Agnes.

Having learned of the death of Prof. Mario Agnes, former National President of Italian Catholic Action and emeritus Editor-in-Chief of *L'Osservatore Romano*, I express my personal condolences to you and to all family members. I would like in particular to gratefully recall his commitment to the Catholic laity and above all his generous and long service to the Direction of the Holy See newspaper. While I assure my prayers that the Risen Lord welcome the dear departed Professor into His glorious kingdom, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to those who are mourning his passing.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Agnes led the Holy See's daily newspaper during the period in which it affirmed and consolidated the vigorous worldwide projection of Wojtyła's Pontificate. But Agnes did not abandon his impassioned participant's view of Italy and of the affairs of Catholics on the peninsula. At the end of his editorship, serenely and knowingly, he left a mature editorial staff prepared to continue – through changes indispensable to every newspaper that seeks to be authentic as such – a daily and silent institutional commitment at the service of a publisher unparalleled in the international panorama of the media. (g.m.v.)

VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Tuesday, 8 May

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Myanmar, at their visit *ad limina Apostolorum*:

- Archbishop Nicholas Mang Thang of Mandalay
- Bishop Raymond Sumlut Gam of Banmaw
- Bishop Lucius Hre Kung of Hakha
- Bishop Philip Lasap Za Hawng of Lashio
- Bishop Francis Daw Tang of Myitkyina
- Archbishop Basilio Athai of Taunggyi
- Bishop Peter Louis Cakü of Kengtung

- Bishop Stephen Tjephe of Loikaw
- Bishop Peter Hla of Pekhon
- Bishop Isaac Danu of Taungngu
- Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, SDB, Archbishop of Yangon, with the Auxiliary Bishop John Saw Yaw Han, titular Bishop of Buffada
- Bishop Justin Saw Min Thide of Hpa-an
- Bishop Raymond Saw Po Ray of Mawlamyine
- Bishop John Hsane Hgyi of Pathein
- Bishop Alexander Pyone Cho of Pyay

Friday, 11 May

- H.E. Viorica Dăncilă, Prime Minister of Romania, with her entourage
- Archbishop Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
- H.B. Rastislav, Archbishop of Prešov, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, with his entourage
- Mr Antonio Raymond Andary, Ambassador of Lebanon, on a farewell visit

Saturday, 12 May

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

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Bishop Rigoberto Corredor Bermúdez, of Pereira, Colombia

H.E. Mr Peter Sopko, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic, on a farewell visit

Monday, 14 May

Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, Federal Republic of Germany, and Coordinator of the Council for the Economy

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, Archbishop of Perugia-Città della Pieve, Italy; President of the Italian Episcopal Conference

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L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION
Unicuique suum



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System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
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Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 8.00; Europe: € 100.00 - US\$ 148.00 € 80.00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 100.00 - US\$ 160.00 - E. 88.00; Oceania, North America: € 160.00 - US\$ 240.00 - E. 130.00. Management Office: phone +390669899480; fax +390669885164; 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, Tiruvandur-605 004, Kerala-India; phone: +9147357252; fax: +9147358191; 299254; e-mail: cip@indiasyl.net.in; kocencia@carmelpublications.com. For North America: L'Osservatore Romano (USPS 065-040) 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. 2197; fax: 866-891-7730 - e-mail: osvsales@ossrom.com. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46730.

At the General Audience the Pontiff concludes his reflections on Baptism

Children have the right to Christian formation

An appeal for peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East

"Children have the right to Christian formation", and "it is the duty of the parents, together with the godfathers and godmothers, to take care to nurture the flame of baptismal grace in their little ones, helping them persevere in the faith". Pope Francis recalled this at the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square on Wednesday morning, 16 May, as he concluded his series of catecheses on Baptism. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflections which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today we conclude the series of catecheses on Baptism. The spiritual effects of this sacrament, invisible to the eye but active in the heart of one who has become a new creature, are clearly seen in the consignment of the white garment and of the lighted candle.

After the washing of regeneration, capable of recreating the person in the likeness of God in true holiness (cf. Eph 4:24), since the first centuries, it has seemed natural to clothe the baptized in a new white garment, reflecting the splendour of life received in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. The white garment, while symbolically expressing what has occurred in the sacrament, an-

nounces the condition of having been transfigured in divine glory.

Saint Paul recalls what it means to be clothed in Christ, when he explains the virtues that the baptized must cultivate: "put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience, forbearing one another and ... forgiving each other. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (cf. Col 3:12-14).

Even the ritual consignment of the flame drawn from the Easter candle, recalls the effect of Baptism: "Receive the light of Christ", says the priest. These words recall that we are not the light, but rather, the light is Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 1:9; 12:46), who, Risen from the dead, overcame the shadows of evil. We are called to receive his splendour! As the flame of the Easter candle gives light to each single candle, so the love of the Risen Lord enflames the hearts of the baptized, filling them with light and warmth. And this is why, since the first centuries, Baptism has also been called "enlightenment", and the one who was baptized is called "enlightened".

This is indeed the Christian vocation: "Walk always as children of the light and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts" (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, n. 321; cf. Jn 12:36). If children are involved, it is the duty of the parents, together with the godfathers and godmothers, to take care to

nurture the flame of baptismal grace in their little ones, helping them persevere in the faith (cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children*, n. 100). Children have the right to Christian formation, which "seeks to lead them gradually to learn God's plan in Christ, so that they may ultimately accept for themselves the faith in which they have been baptized" (*ibid.*, Introduction, n. 3).

Christ's living presence, which is to be safeguarded, defended and expanded in us, is the lamp which lights our steps, the light which directs our choices, the flame which warms hearts on the journey to encounter the Lord, making us capable of helping those who journey with us, until the inseparable communion with Him. From that day forth, Revelation also states, "night shall be no more; and they shall need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever" (cf. 22:5).

The celebration of Baptism concludes with the prayer of the *Our Father*, which belongs to the community of the Children of God. Indeed, children reborn in Baptism will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit fulfilled in Confirmation and will participate in the Eucharist, learning what it means to address God by calling him 'Father'.

At the conclusion of these catecheses on Baptism, I repeat to each of you the invitation I thus expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*: "Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5:22-23)" (n. 15).

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from Scotland, Ireland, Egypt, Mauritius, Indonesia, Canada and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

I offer a special blessing to young people, to the elderly, to the sick and to newlyweds. May the Marian prayer which interweaves the period of this month of May support and motivate each one to live well his or her own presence in the family and in the workplace, bearing the joy of life in Christ with the enthusiasm of disciples.



After delivering his catechesis, the Holy Father made the following appeal calling for an end to violence.

I am very concerned about the escalation of tensions in the Holy Land and in the Middle East, and about the spiral of violence that deviates ever farther from the path of peace, dialogue and negotiation.

I express my great sorrow for the victims and the wounded and, through prayer and affection, I am close to all those who are suffering. I emphasize again that the use of violence never leads to peace. War begets war; violence begets violence.

I invite all the parties involved and the international community to renew their commitment so that dialogue, justice and peace may prevail.

Let us invoke Mary, Queen of Peace. "Hail Mary..."

May God have mercy on us!

I address my cordial best wishes for the month of Ramadan, which will begin tomorrow. May this privileged time of prayer and fasting help you to walk on the path of God which is the way of peace.

To Dharmic delegation

Dialogue and collaboration

At the Casa Santa Marta on Wednesday morning, 16 May, Pope Francis met a Delegation of Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and Sikhs who had participated the previous day in a Conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The following is the English text of the Pope's remarks.

Dear Friends,

I greet all of you who met for the Conference "Dharma and Logos – Dialogue and Cooperation in a Complex Age", held yesterday in Rome. I am most appreciative of the efforts of those who made possible this initiative, which brought together Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

Dialogue and cooperation are essential at a time like our own, when complex and unprecedented factors have led to increased tensions and conflicts, accompanied by violence on both a small and a large scale. It is a cause for thanksgiving to God when religious leaders actively foster a culture of encounter by offering an example of fruitful dialogue and by working together effectively in the service of life, human dignity and the care of creation.

I thank you for what you have done by coming together, in accordance with your respective religious traditions, to promote goodness in our world, and upon you and your communities I invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

Witness to values

To Buddhist Monks from Thailand

In a meeting room in the Paul VI Hall on Wednesday, 16 May, before the General Audience, Pope Francis met a Delegation of Buddhist Monks from Thailand. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's remarks.

I offer you a warm welcome and I thank you for the precious gift of your Sacred Book translated into today's language by the monks of Wat Pho Temple. It is a tangible sign of your generosity and of the friendship that we have shared for so many years, a journey made of many small steps. I think in particular of the meeting in the Vatican between Blessed Pope Paul VI and the Venerable Somdej Phra Wanaratana, whose portrait can be seen in the entrance of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, which you have visited in these days.

It is my heartfelt wish that Buddhists and Catholics will grow increasingly closer, advance in knowledge of one another and in esteem for their respective spiritual traditions, and offer the world a witness to the values of justice, peace, and the defence of human dignity.

With renewed gratitude for this meeting, I invoke upon all of you the divine blessings of joy and peace.

At the Basilica of Saint John Lateran



An invitation "to undertake another step on the journey of the Church of Rome: in a certain sense a new exodus, a new departure, which may renew our identity as the People of God". Pope Francis offered this pastoral direction on Monday evening, 14 May, to representatives of various sectors of Rome's Diocesan community. At the meeting, held at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, the Pope was presented with results from a recent diocesan study on "spiritual afflictions". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The work on spiritual afflictions has borne two fruits. Firstly, a [growing awareness of] the truth of our condition as people in need, infirm, emerged in all the parishes and organizations that were called to examine the spiritual afflictions indicated by Msgr De Donatis. Secondly, [the understanding] that, from this adherence to our truth, not only discouragement and frustration have come about, but above all the awareness that the Lord has not stopped being merciful toward us; on this journey he has enlightened us, has supported us, has begun a somewhat unprecedented journey of communion, and all this so that we may continue walking behind him. We have become more aware – due to certain aspects and to certain dynamics emerging from our study – of being a 'non-people'. This word 'non-people' is a biblical word, used a great deal by the prophets. A non-people called to covenant once more with the Lord.

Such keys to understanding lead us back, even if only intuitively, to what was experienced by the people of the ancient covenant, who first allowed themselves to be led by God to become his People. We too can again allow ourselves to be enlightened by the paradigm of Exodus, which recounts precisely how the Lord chose and educated a people to unite to Himself, in order to make of them the instrument of his presence in the world.

As a paradigm for us, the experience of Israel requires a conjugation so as to become a language, that is, to be understandable and to transmit and bring something to life for us even today.

The Word of God, the work of the Lord, seeks someone to join to Himself, to unite: our life. With this people who we are today, he will act with the same fortitude with which he acted in liberating his people and in giving them a new land.

The story of Exodus speaks of slavery, of an exit, of a passage, of a covenant, of temptation/murmuring and of an entrance. But it is a journey of healing.

Beginning this new phase of an ecclesial journey which, in Rome, certainly does not begin now but rather has lasted 2,000 years, it has been important to ask ourselves – as we have done in these months – what are the forms of slavery – the afflictions, the forms of slavery that take away our freedom – that have ended up rendering us sterile, such as how the Pharaoh wanted Israel: without children who in turn would procreate. This 'childlessness' makes me think of the ecclesial community's capacity for fruitfulness. It is a question I leave with you. Perhaps we should also identify who the Pharaoh is today: this power that insists it is divine and absolute, and that wishes to prevent people from adoring the Lord, from belonging to him, instead rendering them slaves to other powers and to other concerns.

It will be necessary to dedicate some time (perhaps a year?) so that, humbly recognizing our weaknesses and having shared them with the others, we can perceive and experience this fact: there is a gift of mercy and of life fulfillment for us and for all those who live in Rome. This gift is the Father's good will toward us: us as individuals and us as a people. It is his taking the initiative, his preceding us in confirming that in Christ he has loved us and loves us, that he has our life at heart and we are not creatures abandoned to their enslavement, that everything is for our

conversion and for our good: moreover, as Saint Paul says, "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28).

The analysis of afflictions has highlighted a general and sound exhaustion of the parishes both in spinning around idly and in having lost the way to follow. Both are poor attitudes that do harm. Spinning idly is a bit like being in a labyrinth; and losing the way is taking the wrong paths.

Perhaps we are closed within ourselves and within our parish world because we have actually disregarded or did not seriously take into consideration the life of the people who were entrusted to us (those in our territory, in the environments of our daily life), while the Lord always manifests himself by becoming flesh *here and now*, that is, also and precisely in this time so difficult to interpret, in this context so complex and seemingly far from him. He made no mistake in putting us here, in this time, and with these challenges to face.

Perhaps this is why we are here in a condition of slavery, that is, of oppressive limitations, of dependency on things that are not the Lord; thinking perhaps that this would suffice or even that this was what he was asking us to do: to stay near the 'fleshpots', and to make bricks, which would then serve to build the storehouses of the Pharaoh, serviceable to the same power that employs slavery.

We settled for what we had: ourselves and our 'pots'. Ourselves: and here there is the great theme of the "hypertrophy of the individual", clearly present in the findings: the 'I' that cannot manage to become a person, to experience relationships, and that believes us, that he has our life at heart and we are not creatures abandoned to their enslavement, that everything is for our

in the end are revealed to be self-referential, not open to life in its entirety. We have fallen back on concerns of ordinary administration, of survival. How often is this heard: "Priests are busy; they have things to do; they have this, this and that to do...". And people perceive this. "He is a good priest, but why let ourselves be taken up in this mad whirlwind?". It is interesting: It is good that this situation has wearied us; this weariness is a grace of God: it makes us want to get out.

And to get out we need God's call and the presence/company of our neighbour.

It is necessary to pay fearless heed to our thirst for God and to the cry that rises up from our people of Rome, asking ourselves: in what sense does this cry express a need for salvation, that is, for God? How does God see and hear that cry? How many situations, among those that have emerged from your findings, truly express that very cry? The invocation that God show himself and draw us out from the impression (or from bitter experience, which makes one 'murmur') that our life is pointless and as if dispossessed by the frenzy of things to do and by time that constantly slips through our fingers; dispossessed by merely utilitarian/commercial and barely gratuitous relationships, by fear of the future; dispossessed also by a faith conceived of only as

something to do and not as a liberation that renews us at every step, blessed and happy with the life we live.

As you will have understood, I am inviting you to undertake another step on the journey of the Church of Rome: in a certain sense a new exodus, a new departure, which may renew our identity as the People of God, with no regrets for what we must leave behind.

It will be necessary, as I was saying, to listen to the cry of the people, as Moses was exhorted to do: thus knowing how to interpret, in the light of the



Listen to the cry of the people

With the Diocese of Rome

Word of God, the social and cultural phenomena in which you are immersed. That is, learning to discern where He is already present, in very ordinary forms of holiness and of communion with him: encountering and accompanying you evermore with the people who are living the Gospel and friendship with the Lord. People who perhaps have not learned the catechism, yet know how to give a sense of faith and hope to life's basic experiences; who have already made their experience with the Lord meaningful, and precisely in those problems, those environments and those situations from which our ordinary pastoral ministry remains normally distant. I think now of Ruth and Shiphrah, the two midwives who objected to the Pharaoh's homicidal order and thus impeded the slaughter (cf. Ex 1:8-21). In Rome too, there are certainly women and men who interpret their everyday work as an effort meant to give life to someone

and not to take it, and they do so without particular mandates on anyone's part but because "they fear God" and serve him. The life of the people of Israel owes a great deal to those two women, as our Church owes a great deal to people who remain nameless but who have prepared the coming of God. And the thread of history, the thread of holiness, is brought forth by people whom we do not know: the nameless, those who are hidden and bring everything forward.

To do this it is necessary for our communities to become capable of generating a people – this is important, do not forget it: Church with people, not Church without people –, capable, as it were, of offering and creating relationships in which our people can feel known, recognized, welcomed, well-liked, in other words: not an anonymous part of a whole. A people in which one feels a quality of relationships which is already the beginning of a Promised Land, of an endeavour that the Lord is carrying out for us and with us. Phenomena such as individualism, isolation, fear of existence, social fragmentation and danger ..., typical of all large cities and also present in Rome; in these communities of ours they already have an effective instrument of change. We need not invent another; we ourselves are already this instrument that can be effective provided that we become subject to what I have elsewhere previously called the *revolution of tenderness*.

And if guiding a Christian community is the specific task of an ordained minister, that is, of the parish priest, *pastoral care* is incarnated in Baptism; it blooms from fraternity and is not solely the task of the parish priest and clergy, but of all the bap-

tized. In Rome too, this care, spread and multiplied through relationships, can also generate a *revolution of tenderness*, which will be enriched by the sensitivity, by the gaze, by the past experiences of many.

Keeping this as a foremost pastoral task, we will be able to be the instrument through which we will both experience the action of the Holy Spirit among us (cf. Rom 5:5), and see lives change (cf. Acts 4:32-35). Just as through Moses' humanity God intervened for Israel, likewise the restored and reconciled humanity of Christians can be the instrument (perhaps the sacrament) of this action of the Lord who wishes to free his people from all that makes them a non-people, with its burden of injustice and of sin which begets death. *We need to look at this people and not at ourselves*, to allow ourselves to be challenged and inconvenienced. This will surely produce something new, original and desired by the Lord.

Before reconciliation and awareness, there is a passage that the Church of Rome must undergo in order to be faithful to this call of hers; and that is to be reconciled and to reclaim a truly pastoral gaze – attentive, caring, benevolent, engaged – both toward herself and her history, and toward the people to whom she is sent.

I would like to invite you to dedicate some time to this: to ensure that already this coming year may be a sort of preparation of the backpack (or the luggage) to begin a journey of several years that will enable us to reach the new land which the pillar of cloud and fire will point out to us. This means new conditions of life and of pastoral action, more responsive to the mission and to the needs of the Roman people of these times of ours; more creative and more liberating for the presbyters too, and for those who cooperate more directly in the mission and the edification of the Christian community. Not to be afraid of what we are and of the gift that we have, but to make it bear fruit. The journey may be long: the people of Israel spent 40 years. Do not be discouraged; go forth!

The Lord calls us to "go and bear fruit" (cf. Jn 15:16). In plants, the fruit is that part produced and offered for the life of other living beings. Do not be afraid to bear fruit, to let yourselves be "consumed" by the reality that you will encounter, even if this "willingness to be consumed" very closely resembles disappearing, dying. Perhaps some traditional initiatives will have to be reformed or perhaps even discontinued: we can do so only by knowing where we are going, why and with Whom.

I invite you to also interpret in this way some of the difficulties and afflictions that you have identified in your communities: as realities that perhaps are no longer good to eat, they can no longer be offered for anyone's hunger. Which in no way means that we can no longer produce anything, but rather, that we must graft new shoots: grafts that will bear new fruit. Take courage and go forth. The time is ours. Forward.



Brenda Bullock, "Migrant" (from the "Exodus" series)

El Greco, "Pentecost"
(1596, detail)

FRANCESCO ALEO

In reference to the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis has often quoted the Latin expression *ipse harmonia est*, attributing it to Basil of Caesarea, and more precisely to the work that the great Church Father dedicated to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, *De Spiritu Sancto*. The quotation is dear to the Pope and it has reappeared in several discourses and homilies: in his 15 March 2013 address to the Cardinals just two days after his election, then in his homily for Pentecost on 19 March 2013, in a homily in Istanbul on 29 November 2014, and in his address to the Roman Curia on 22 December 2014 – to say nothing of the occasions prior to his election in the Conclave, such as the discourses dating back to his episcopate in Buenos Aires or in the interview published in the November 2007 issue of the periodical "30 Days". This citation has not been identified thus far, but now it is possible to state, with all due respect to malevolent critics, that the text of Basil the Great does exist.

The text cited by the Pontiff is in fact found in the Cappadocian Father's *De Spiritu Sancto*, in Chapter 16 to be precise, towards the end of paragraph 38. It is found there in the Italian translation by Giovanna Azzali Bernardelli, while in the original Greek it is transliterated according to the text *Sources Chrétiennes* curated by Benoît Pruche: "Do 'all His angels' and 'all His hosts' praise God? It is through the co-operation of the Spirit. Do 'thousand thousand' of angels stand before Him, and 'ten thousand times ten thousand' ministering spirits? They are blamelessly doing their proper work by the power of the Spirit. All the glorious and unspeakable harmony of the highest heavens [*pásan oun ten hyperouránon ekēnen kai árretōn harmonian*] both in the service of God and in the mutual concord of the celestial powers, can



'Ipse harmonia est'

In search of Saint Basil's quotation on the Holy Spirit

therefore only be preserved by the direction of the Spirit".

The Latin aphorism *ipse harmonia est* cannot and does not seek to be, as such, a literal translation of the passage in question. An aphorism is in fact, according to the recently updated classical Italian language dictionary compiled by Giacomo Devoto and Gian Carlo Oli, provides a "briefly and effectively worded definition which encompasses and summarizes the result of considerations, observations and experiences". And *ipse harmonia est* is indeed an aphorism in Latin which concentrates in a brief phrase the longer quotation of the original Greek, placed at the conclusion of an important paragraph of Basil of Caesarea's *De Spiritu Sancto*.

This text is the only passage of the Basilian work in which the Greek term *harmonia* is found. The fact, then, that in the first treatise by a Christian author on the Holy Spirit the word *harmonia* is an *hapax*, meaning it appears only once, and that in the entire body of writings attributed to the Bishop of Caesarea it appears only one other time attests to the importance and special

relevance that this term assumes in the *oikonomia* of the redemption, of which the author makes mention immediately afterwards, in paragraph 39.

Paragraph 38 of *De Spiritu Sancto* is densely packed with theologically important affirmations. The interpretation might be problematic and subject to debate if – as Jean Gribomont held in 376, the year in which Basil completed the treatise – it were still suspected to be heresy. Indeed, it was suspected by some intransigent Nicene monks belonging to ultraconservative circles, due to the close and longstanding friendship between Basil and Eustathius of Sebaste, his teacher of ascetic life, who, by then, had clearly joined the ranks of the Pneumatomachi, that is, literally, opponents of the Holy Spirit.

According to the Cappadocian Father, the communion between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is made manifest not only in things created and visible, but also in things increate and invisible. These things can be known only by analogy and it is the Spirit who permits this knowledge. It is the Trinitarian commu-

nion that reveals the divine Persons as causes: the primary cause is the Father, the operating cause is the Son, and the perfecting cause is the Spirit.

Quoting then a verse from Psalms, according to which "by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth" (33[32]:6, read from the Trinitarian perspective by all fourth-century Greek Fathers), Basil could state that what creates is the Word, which is not a "significant modulation of air" but is that Word which "in the beginning was with God and is God". However, analogy with the *status vocis* induced the Cappadocian Father to call the Spirit "the breath from the mouth of God" and, with the Gospel of John, "the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father" (cf. 15:26).

Basil passes from the causes to the divine Persons: the Lord ordains, the Word creates, the breath confirms. But all is made accessible through holiness which performs healing and transformation: as the cautery is not the flame and the flame is not the cautery, yet one without the other cannot induce healing, so are the heavenly powers unable to apply their salvific power without the holiness that only the Holy Spirit, in the Trinitarian communion, can enable them to manifest and communicate.

All the supernatural powers need the Spirit, so that holiness, a gift of the Spirit himself, may keep them distinct from those of evil, sin and vice. The Holy Spirit, in heaven and on earth, conforms everything according to the measure of holiness, God's participating and participated presence in the visible and invisible universe, holiness that without the Spirit cannot be recognized, praised, confirmed and completed in those who receive his life-giving breath.

Therefore, it is important to consider the entire paragraph in order to understand the meaning of the Latin aphorism *ipse harmonia est* repeatedly cited and applied by Bergoglio to the Holy Spirit. Indeed this expression summarizes and sheds new light on Basil's weighty affirmations, which the Pontiff, with his Magisterium, now renders timely for the whole Church.

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Members of the Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference on a visit ad limina Apostolorum

– Archbishop John Hung Shan-chuan, SVD, of Taipei; Apostolic Administrator of Quemoy and Matzu Islands

– Bishop John Baptist Lee Keh-mien of Hsinchu

– Bishop Philip Huang Chao-ming of Hwalien

– Archbishop Peter Liu Cheng-chung, Bishop of Kaohsiung

– Bishop Thomas Chung An-zu of Kiayi

– Bishop Martin Su Yao-wen of Taichung

– Bishop Bosco Lin Chi-nan of Tainan

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Irineu Gassen, OFM, of Vacaria, Brazil (9 May).

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Vacaria, Brazil, Fr Silvio Guterres Dutra from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre, Brazil. Until now he has served as rector of the Nossa Senhora da Conceição in Viamão (9 May).

Bishop-elect Guterres Dutra, 51, was born in Encruzilhada do Sul, Brazil. He holds a licence in pastoral theology from the Lateran University, Rome. He was ordained a priest on 18 December 1993. He has served in parish ministry and as: pastoral coordinator of the Vi-

carate of Guaíba and as vice rector of the Nossa Senhora da Conceição Major Seminary, Viamão.

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of San Fernando de la Unión, the Philippines, Fr Daniel O. Presto from the clergy of the Diocese of Iba. Until now he has served as diocesan administrator of Iba (9 May).

Bishop-elect Presto, 55, was born in Mangaldan, the Philippines. He holds a degree in education. He was ordained a priest on 1 December 1990. He has served in parish ministry and as: vicar of Saint Rita Parish, Olongapo City, and of Saint Michael Parish, in Santa Cruz; president of the Columban Center in Olongapo City; vicar forane of Saint Joseph Vicariate; director of Saint Augustine School of Iba and president of Magsaysay Memorial College of San Narciso; member of the Presbyteral Council.

The Pope to the Benedictine Confederation

Contemplatives at the service of others

"There is no opposition between contemplative life and service to others". Pope Francis shared this thought with monks and sisters of the Benedictine Confederation, whom he received in audience on Thursday morning, 19 April, in the Clementine Hall, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Confederation's founding. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's remarks, which he delivered in Italian.

Reverend Abbot Primate,
Dear Father Abbots,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Benedictine Confederation and I thank the Abbot Primate for his kind words. I would like to express all my consideration and gratitude for the considerable contribution that the Benedictines have brought to the life of the Church, in every part of the world, for nearly 1,500 years. In this celebration of the Jubilee of the Benedictine Confederation we wish to remember, in a special way, the commitment of Pope Leo XIII, who in 1893 wished to unite all Benedictines by founding a common house of study and prayer here in Rome. Let us thank God for this inspiration, because this has led the Benedictines throughout the world to live a more profound spirit of communion with the See of Peter and among themselves.

Benedictine spirituality is renowned for its motto: *Ora et labora et lege*. Prayer, work, study. In contemplative life, God often announces his presence in unexpected ways. In meditating on the Word of God in the *Lectio Divina*, we are called to abide in religious listening to his voice in order to live in constant and joyful obedience. Prayer engenders in our hearts – ready to receive the surprising gifts that God is always ready to give us – a spirit of renewed fervour which leads us, through our daily work, to seek to share the gifts of God's wisdom with others: with the community, with those who come to the monastery in their search for God (*"quaerere Deum"*), and with those who study in your schools, colleges and universities. Thus an ever renewed and reinvigorated spiritual life is thereby created.

Some characteristic aspects of the liturgical Time of Easter, which we are living, such as the announcement and the surprise, the swift response, and the heart ready to receive God's gifts, in reality are part of everyday Benedictine life. In his *Rule*, Saint Benedict asks that you "on no account let [anyone] exalt anything above Christ" (n. 72), so that you may be ever vigilant, in the present, ready to listen to him and follow him (cf. *ibid.*, Prologue). Your love for the liturgy, which is the essential work of God in monastic life, is essential first and foremost for you yourselves, enabling you to abide in the living presence of the Lord; and it is valuable for the whole Church

which, in the course of centuries has benefited from it as from spring water which irrigates and fertilizes, nourishing the capacity to experience, personally and in community, the encounter with the Risen Lord.

If Saint Benedict was a shining star – as Saint Gregory the Great called him – in his time marked by a profound crisis of values and of institutions, it was so because he was able to discern between the essential



and the secondary in spiritual life, placing the Lord firmly at the centre. May you too, his children in this age of ours, practice discernment so as to recognize what comes from the Holy Spirit and what comes from the spirit of the world or the spirit of the devil. Discernment which "calls for something

more than intelligence or common sense" but "is a gift which we must implore" of the Holy Spirit; "without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend" (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, nn. 166-167).

In this era, in which people are so busy that they do not have enough time to listen to God's voice, your monasteries and your convents become as oases, where men and women of every age, origin, culture and religion can discover the beauty of silence and rediscover themselves, in harmony with creation, allowing God to re-establish just order in their life. The Benedictine charism of welcoming is extremely valuable

ment to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. I encourage you to continue in this important work for the Church and for the world, placing also at her service your customary hospitality. In effect, there is no opposition between contemplative life and service to others. The Benedictine monasteries – whether in cities or far from them – are places of prayer and welcome. Your establishment is also important for the people who come searching for you. Christ is present in this encounter: he is present in the monk, in the pilgrim, in the needy.

I am grateful to you for your service in the educational and formative field, here in Rome and in many parts of the world. Benedictines are known for being "a school at the service of the Lord". I exhort you to give students, along with the necessary ideas and knowledge, the instruments that can enable them to grow in that wisdom that spurs them to continually seek God in their life; that same wisdom that will lead them to practice mutual understanding, because we are all children of God, brothers and sisters, in this world so thirsty for peace.

In conclusion, dear brothers and sisters, I hope that the Jubilee celebrations for the anniversary of the founding of the Benedictine Confederation may be a fruitful occasion to reflect on the search for God and his wisdom, and on how to pass on more efficiently his perennial richness to future generations.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, in communion with the heavenly Church and Saints Benedict and Scholastica, I invoke the Apostolic Blessing upon each of you. And I ask you, please, to continue to pray for me. Thank you.

for the new evangelization, because it offers you a way to welcome Christ in every person who arrives, helping those who seek God to receive the spiritual gifts he has in store for each of us.

The Benedictines have always been recognized for their commit-

Muslim-Christian colloquium in Amman

Dignity of life and dialogue among religions

"Each person or group in need or victim of persecution should be helped because they are sisters and brothers in humanity. This is a question of justice". This thought was stressed by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, in a message to participants in the fifth Colloquium organized by the said Dicastery and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, which opened in Amman, Jordan on Wednesday, 9 May.

The message was read by Comboni Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Secretary of the Dicastery and head of the Catholic delegation. The corresponding Muslim delegation was led by H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Chairman of the Board of the host Institution. The two-day discussions focused on the theme "Religions and the Dignity of Life: Christian and Muslim Viewpoints".

In his message, Cardinal Tauran recalled "the recent atrocities perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State terrorists", emphasizing that these horrific acts "should never be forgotten", noting that the attempt to justify them in the name of religion "makes the crime more heinous". Muslim religious leaders as well as the Muslim community, the Cardinal observed, have largely rejected the justifications of the terrorists, while a minority of Muslims "has been and is still the victim of persecution", suffering forced emigration and many deaths.

Pope Francis' visit to Jordan in May 2014 was also intended as a sign of solidarity with our "Muslim brothers and sisters", the Cardinal recalled. "Standing with the persecuted", he added, "should go beyond religious or confessional affiliation" and "is necessary for the credibility of religions and of the believers". The Cardinal noted that

"poverty, injustice, discrimination, absence of [prospects] for the future" are believed to lead to terrorism.

But, he cautioned, other reasons must not be underestimated. "Religious discourse, school textbooks, media, especially social media", can play both positive and negative roles in fostering peace. Moreover, "a sound approach to religion is of first importance" in providing a "source for personal and social peace and, in the end, for peace in the world".

At the end of the Colloquium, a Final Declaration was issued, reiterating among other things the "strong relationship between respect for human dignity and rights ... and the progress and prosperity of a nation", and emphasizing particularly that migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking "deserve special attention and care".

At the Regina Caeli s an appeal against the attacks in Indonesia

No more hatred and violence

Applause for mothers who care for the family

Pope Francis has called for an end to the recent violence in Indonesia. Following multiple bombings targeting the Christian community of Surabaya on Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13 May, the Pontiff expressed his closeness to the families of the victims and to the Indonesian people during the Regina Caeli on Sunday. He prayed that feelings of "reconciliation

and fraternity may find a place in everyone's heart". Before making this appeal, Francis referred to the day's liturgical solemnity, inviting the faithful present in Saint Peter's Square to be "men and women of the Ascension, that is, those who seek Christ along the paths of our time". The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which he shared in Italian.

nando di Puglia and San Marzano sul Sarno; the many young confirmants and confirmed from Genoa, as well as those from Emmenbrücke, Switzerland, and Liscate; the children from the Parish of San Giustino in Rome; and the students of the Tommaso Aversa Institute of Mistretta.

I greet the employees of Federal Express Europe, with the hope that the current difficulties may find a positive solution.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today, in Italy and in many other countries, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is being celebrated. This Solemnity embraces two elements. On the one hand it directs our gaze toward heaven, where the glorified Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (cf. Mk 16:19). On the other, it reminds us of the mission of the Church: why? Because Jesus, Risen and Ascended into heaven, sends his disciples to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Therefore, the Ascension exhorts us to lift our gaze toward heaven, in order to return it immediately to the earth, to implement the tasks that the Risen Lord entrusts to us.

It is what we are invited to do in the day's Gospel passage, in which the event of the Ascension occurs immediately after the mission that Jesus entrusts to the disciples. It is a boundless mission – that is, literally without boundaries – which surpasses human strength. Jesus says, in fact: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). The task which Jesus entrusts to a small group of common men lacking great intellectual capacity seems truly too bold! Yet

This is how this mission was able to be accomplished, and the Apostles began this work which was then continued by their successors. The mission that Jesus entrusted to the Apostles has continued through the centuries, and continues still today: it requires the cooperation of all of us. Each one, in fact, by the power of the Baptism that he or she received, is qualified in turn to proclaim the Gospel. Baptism is precisely what qualifies us and also spurs us to be missionaries, to proclaim the Gospel.

The Lord's Ascension into heaven, while inaugurating a new form of Jesus' presence among us, calls us to keep eyes and hearts open to encounter him, to serve him and bear witness to him to others. It is a matter of being men and women of the Ascension, that is, those who seek Christ along the paths of our time, bringing his word of salvation to the ends of the earth. On this journey we encounter Christ himself in our brothers and sisters, especially in the poorest, in those who suffer in their very flesh the harsh and humiliating experience of old and new forms of poverty. As at the beginning the Risen Christ sent his Apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit, so too

does he send all of us today, with the same power, so as to establish concrete and visible signs of hope. Because Jesus gives us hope. He went to heaven and opened the gates of heaven and the hope that we will reach it.

May the Virgin Mary who, as Mother of the dead and Risen

Lord, enlivened the faith of the first community of disciples, help us too to "lift up our hearts", as the Liturgy exhorts us to do. And at the same time may she help us to keep our "feet on the ground", and to bravely sow the Gospel in the practical situations of life and of history.

After praying the Regina Caeli, Pope Francis added the following remarks:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am particularly close to the dear people of Indonesia, in a special way to the Christian communities of the city of Surabaya

which was harshly struck by the grave attack on places of worship. I raise my prayers for all the victims and their relatives. Together let us invoke the God of peace to put an end to these



John Singleton Copley, "The Ascension" (1775)

acts of violence, and so that feelings not of hatred and violence but of reconciliation and fraternity may find a place in everyone's heart. Let us pray in silence.

Today is the World Day of Social Communications, with the theme "Fake news and journalism for peace". I greet all media workers, in particular journalists who strive to find the truth in news, contributing to a just and peaceful society.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims; in particular the musicians and folklore groups from Germany; the faithful of Paraguay, members of the Virgen de Caacupé community residing in Rome; participants in the UCIIM Conference, 50 years after the death of their Founder Gesualdo Nosengo; the Dives in Misericordia movement of Naples.

I greet the faithful from Catania, Scandicci, San Ferdi-

I address a special thought to the Italian Alpine troops gathered in Trento for the National Assembly. I encourage them to be witnesses to charity and workers for peace, following the example of Alpine soldier Teresio Olivelli, defender of the weak, recently proclaimed Blessed. And as today is the day dedicated to mothers in many countries, a round of applause for mothers! I would like to greet all the mothers, thanking them for their care of the family. I also recall the mothers who are watching us from heaven and continue to keep us in their prayers.

Let us pray to our heavenly Mother, who today, 13 May, with the name of Our Lady of Fatima, helps us to continue the journey.

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



Our Lady of Fatima, turn your gaze towards us, towards our families, our country, and the world

(@Pontifex)

this small company, insignificant compared to the great powers of the world, is sent to bring the message of Jesus' love and mercy to every corner of the earth.

But this plan of God can be accomplished only with the strength that God himself grants to the Apostles. In this sense, Jesus assures them that their mission will be supported by the Holy Spirit. And he says this: "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).