

## CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

### EVANGELIZATION INTENTION – JANUARY

**That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.**



#### 2. *Mary!*

"I have called you by name" (*Is* 43:1). The first reason not to fear is the fact that God has called us *by name*. The angel, God's messenger, called Mary by name. To God belongs the power to give names. In the work of creation, he calls into existence every creature by name. There is an identity behind a name, that which is unique in every single thing, in every single person; that intimate essence that only God truly knows. This divine prerogative was shared with man when God invited him to name the animals, the birds and also his own offspring (*Gen* 2:19-21; 4:1). Many cultures share this profound biblical vision; they recognize in a name the revelation of the profound mystery of life and the meaning of existence.

When God calls someone by name, he also reveals to the person his vocation, his plan of holiness and fulfilment, through which the person becomes a gift to others and is made unique. And when God wants to expand the horizons of life, he gives a new name to the person he is calling, as he did with Simon, whom he called "Peter". From here comes the custom of taking a new name when entering a religious congregation, to indicate a new identity and mission. Since the divine call is unique and personal, we need the courage to disentangle ourselves from the pressure of being shaped by conforming patterns, so that our life can truly become an authentic and irreplaceable gift to God, to the Church and to all.

Dear young people, to be called by name is therefore a sign of our great dignity in the eyes of God and a sign of his love for us. God calls each one of you by name. All of you are *the "you" of God*, precious in his eyes, worthy of respect and loved (cf. *Is* 43:4). Welcome with joy this dialogue that God offers you, this appeal he makes to you, calling you by name.

#### *4. Courage in the present moment*

From the certainty that God's grace is with us comes the strength to take courage in the present moment: the courage to carry forward what God asks of us here and now, in every area of our lives; courage to embrace the vocation which God reveals to us; courage to live out our faith without hiding or diminishing it.

Yes, when we open ourselves to God's grace, the impossible becomes a reality. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (*Rom* 8:31). God's grace touches the "now" of your lives, "takes hold" of you as you are, with all your fears and limits, but it also reveals his marvellous plans! You young people need to know that someone truly believes in you: please know that the Pope has confidence in you, that the Church has confidence in you! For your part, have confidence in the Church!

To the young Mary was entrusted an important task, precisely because she was young. You young people have strength as you go through a phase of your lives where energy is not lacking. Make use of this strength and this energy to improve the world, beginning with the realities closest to you. I want important responsibilities to be given to you within the Church; that there may be the courage to make space for you; and that you may be prepared to take on these responsibilities.

I invite you once again to contemplate Mary's love: a caring, dynamic and concrete love. A love full of boldness and focused completely on the gift of self. A Church permeated by these Marian qualities will always be a Church going forth, one that goes beyond her own limits and boundaries to let the grace she has received overflow. If we allow ourselves to be truly touched by Mary's example, we will live out authentically that charity which urges us to love God above all else and above ourselves, to love those with whom we share our daily life. And we will also love those who may seem hardly lovable in themselves. It is a love that is service and dedication, above all towards the weakest and poorest, love that transforms our faces and fills us with joy.

I would like to end with the beautiful words Saint Bernard used in a famous homily on the mystery of the Annunciation, words that express the anticipation of all humanity for Mary's response: "You have heard, O Virgin that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer... We too, O Lady, are waiting for your word of compassion... In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life... This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet... Answer quickly, O Virgin" (*Sermon* 4, 8-9; *Opera Omnia*).

Dear young people, the Lord, the Church, the world are waiting for your answer to the unique call that each one receives in this life! As World Youth Day in Panama draws closer, I invite you to prepare yourselves for our gathering with the joy and enthusiasm of those who wish to participate in such a great adventure. WYD is for the courageous! Not for young people who are searching only for comfort and who withdraw whenever difficulties arise. Do you accept the challenge?

MESSAGE FOR THE THIRTY-THIRD WORLD YOUTH DAY 2018

FRANCIS

11 February 2018

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180211\\_messaggio-giovani\\_2018.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20180211_messaggio-giovani_2018.html)

© Copyright 2018 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

**Other text:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180117\\_cile-maipu-giovani.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180117_cile-maipu-giovani.html)

## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – FEBRUARY

**For a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, enforced prostitution, and violence.**



Certainly there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience; because it is thorny; because it is shameful. Then there are those who, even knowing this, do not want to speak because they are at the end of the “supply chain”, as a user of the “services” that are offered on the street or on the Internet. There are, lastly, those who do not want it to be talked about, because they are directly involved in the criminal organizations that reap handsome profits from trafficking. Yes, it takes courage and honesty, “when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others”.[1]

The work of raising awareness must begin at home, with ourselves, because only in this way will we be able to then make our communities aware, motivating them to commit themselves so that no human being may ever again be a victim of trafficking.

This seems like an easier task for young people, given that they are less structured in their thinking, less confused by prejudices, freer to reason with their own minds. The more enthusiastic and spontaneous voice of young people can break the silence in order to denounce the atrocities of trafficking and propose concrete solutions. Adults who are ready to listen can be of great help.

For my part, as you may have noted, I have never missed an opportunity to openly denounce trafficking as a crime against humanity. It is “a true form of slavery, unfortunately more and more widespread, which concerns every country, even the most developed. It is a reality which affects

the most vulnerable in society: women of all ages, children, the handicapped, the poorest, and those who come from broken families and from difficult situations in society".[2]

I have also said that "what is called for, then, is a shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will to gain victory on this front. Responsibility is required towards those who have fallen victim to trafficking in order to protect their rights, to guarantee their safety and that of their families, and to prevent the corrupt and criminals from escaping justice and having the last word over the lives of others".[3]

Young people are in a privileged position to encounter survivors of human trafficking. Go to your parishes, to an association near home; meet the people, listen to them. Your response and concrete commitment will grow from there. In fact, I see the risk that this may become an abstract issue, but it is not abstract. There are signs that you can learn how to "read", which tell you: this could be a victim of trafficking here, a slave. We need to promote the culture of encounter which in itself leads to an unexpected wealth and great surprises. Saint Paul gives us an example: in Christ, the slave Onesimus is no longer a slave but much more; he is a beloved brother (cf. Philem 1:16).

You young people can find hope in Christ, and you can also encounter him in migrants, people who have fled from home, and who remain trapped in the networks. Do not be afraid to encounter them. Open your heart, let them in, be ready to change. Encountering the other naturally leads to change, but there is no need to fear this change. It will always be for the best. Remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Enlarge your tent" (cf. Is 54:2).

The Church must promote and create spaces for encounter. For this reason I have requested that parishes be opened for welcoming. It is important to recognize the great task in response to my appeal, thank you! I ask you who are present here today to work in favour of opening up to others, especially when they are wounded in their dignity. Become promoters of initiatives that your parishes can host. Help the Church to create spaces for sharing experiences and integration of faith and of life.

Social networks too, especially for young people, are a seemingly endless opportunity for encounter: the Internet can offer more opportunities for encounter and solidarity among all, and this is a good thing; it is a gift of God. However, for every instrument that is offered to us, the choice that mankind decides to make of it is fundamental. The communicative environment can help us to grow or, on the contrary, to become disoriented. The risks inherent in some of these virtual spaces must not be underestimated; through the web, many young people are lured and drawn into slavery from which it then becomes beyond their ability to free themselves. In this sphere, adults, parents and teachers — also older siblings and cousins — are called to the task of watching over and protecting youths. You must do the same with your relatives and friends: perceive and point out particular vulnerabilities, suspicious cases on which light must be shed.

Thus, use the web to share a positive account of your experiences of encounter with our brothers and sisters in the world, recount and share good practices and generate a virtuous circle.

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER  
REFLECTION AND ACTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
FRANCIS  
12 February 2018

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180212\\_contro-tratta.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/february/documents/papa-francesco_20180212_contro-tratta.html)

© Copyright 2018 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana



## EVANGELIZATION INTENTION - MARCH

**That Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.**



[...] Our meeting allows me to renew my closeness to all those suffering from the conflicts that for decades have beset the Holy Land. The uncertainty of the situation and the lack of understanding between the parties continue to create insecurity, the restriction of fundamental rights, and the flight of many people from their land. I invoke God's help in this, and I ask all those involved to intensify their efforts to achieve a stable peace based on justice and recognition of the rights of all. To this end, any kind of violence, discrimination or displays of intolerance against Jewish, Christian and Muslim worshipers, or places of worship, must be firmly rejected. The Holy City, whose *Status Quo* must be defended and preserved, ought to be a place where all can live together peaceably; otherwise, the endless spiral of suffering will continue for all.

I would offer a particular greeting to the members of the various Christian communities in the Holy Land. It is my hope that they will continue to be recognized as an integral part of society and that, as citizens and believers in their own right, they can continue tirelessly to contribute to the common good and the growth of peace, striving to further reconciliation and concord. This contribution will be the more effective to the extent that there is harmony between the region's different Churches. Particularly important in this regard would be increased cooperation in supporting Christian families and young people, so that they will not be forced to leave their land. By working together in this delicate area, the faithful of different confessions will also be able to grow in mutual knowledge and fraternal relations.

Here I would reaffirm my heartfelt desire and commitment to progress on our way to full unity, in obedience to Jesus' fervent prayer in the Cenacle "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). I know that past wounds continue to affect the memory of many people. It is not possible to change the past, but, without forgetting grave failures of charity over the centuries, let us look to a future of full reconciliation and fraternal communion, and take up the work before

us, as the Lord desires. Not to do so today would be an even graver fault; it would be to disregard both the urgent call of Christ and the signs of the times sown by the Spirit along the Church's path. Inspired by the same Spirit, may we not let the memory of times marked by lack of communication or mutual accusations, or present difficulties and uncertainty about the future, prevent us from walking together towards visible unity, nor hinder us from praying and working together to proclaim the Gospel and to serve those in need. In this regard, the ongoing theological dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox, in which the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem participates actively and constructively, is a comforting sign of hope on our journey. How good it would be to say of Catholics and Orthodox living in Jerusalem what the Evangelist Luke said of the first Christian community: "All who believed were together... one heart and soul" (*Acts* 2:44; 4:32).

Your Beatitude, I thank you and the distinguished members of your entourage most cordially for your visit. I reaffirm my closeness to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, and my affection for our friends of the other great religions who live there. I hope and pray that the day of a stable and lasting peace for all will soon come. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you! [...] For my brethren and companions' sake I will say, 'peace be within you!'" (*Psalms* 122: 6-8).

ADDRESS TO HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS III  
GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM  
FRANCIS  
23 October 2017

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20171023\\_patriarca-theofilos-iii.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171023_patriarca-theofilos-iii.html)

© Copyright 2017 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana



## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – APRIL

**For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war-torn areas, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.**



[...] Despite the praiseworthy attempt to lessen, through the codification of humanitarian law, the negative consequences of hostilities on the civilian population, all too often we receive, from various theatres of war, evidence of atrocious crimes and grave offences against individuals and their dignity, perpetrated with utter disregard for the most elementary consideration of their humanity.

Images of corpses, of mutilated or decapitated bodies, of our brothers and sisters who are tortured, crucified, and demeaned even in their remains, are an affront to the conscience of mankind. There are growing reports of ancient cities, whose cultural treasures date back thousands of years, being reduced to ruins. Or of hospitals and schools deliberately attacked and destroyed, thus depriving entire generations of their right to life, to health and to education.

How many churches and places of worship have been the target of deliberate attacks, often at times of prayer, with numerous victims among worshippers and ministers, in violation of the fundamental right to freedom of religion! At times, sad to say, the way such news is reported can lead to a kind of saturation that anaesthetises people and relativizes the gravity of the problems. As a result, they find it more difficult to be moved to compassion and to open their conscience to a sense of solidarity.[3]

If this is to happen, a change of heart is necessary, an opening to God and neighbour, that would encourage people to overcome their indifference and to experience solidarity as a moral virtue and a social attitude capable of inspiring a commitment on behalf of suffering individuals.[4]

At the same time, it is encouraging to see the many examples of solidarity and charity that emerge in times of war. There are so many individuals, so many charitable and non-governmental organizations both within and outside the Church, whose members spare no effort and fear no danger in their efforts to care for the wounded and ill, to bury the dead,[5] to provide food to the hungry and water to the thirsty, and to visit prisoners.

Indeed, the help given to victims of conflicts combines a number of works of mercy, those acts on which all of us will be judged at the end of our lives. May humanitarian organizations act always in accordance with the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and autonomy. It is my hope that those principles, which constitute the core of humanitarian law, can *find a place in the conscience* of combatants and humanitarian aid workers, and then be *put into practice*.<sup>[6]</sup>

Where humanitarian law presents hesitations and omissions, may individual consciences be able to acknowledge the moral duty to respect and protect the dignity of the human person in every circumstance, especially in those situations where it is most endangered. For this to happen, I would like to mention *the importance of prayer* and the need to ensure that, alongside technical and legal training, spiritual assistance be given to soldiers and humanitarian aid workers.

Dear brothers and sisters, to all those – and some of them are here with us today – who have risked their own lives to save those of others and to alleviate the suffering of peoples affected by armed conflicts, Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew are addressed. He says: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (25:40).

I entrust you to the intercession of Mary Most Holy, Queen of Peace, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. To you and your families I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE ON  
INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW  
FRANCIS  
28 October 2017

**See full message:**

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20171028\\_diritto-internazionale-umanitario.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171028_diritto-internazionale-umanitario.html)

© Copyright 2017 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## EVANGELIZATION INTENTION – MAY

**That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.**



[...]Your visit offers me the occasion to renew my encouragement to you and my trust, and to emphasize the spirit of communion that you have at heart to maintain with the Apostolic See. For the Gospel to touch and convert hearts in a deep way, we must indeed remember that it is only by being united in love that we can render our testimony authentically and effectively. Unity and diversity are for you realities that must be kept firmly connected in order to uphold the spiritual and human richness of your dioceses, which is expressed in many ways. I also hope that the good cooperation between the Church, the State and society as a whole in Cameroon, recently manifested by the signing of a Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Cameroon, may bear abundant fruit. I invite you to put this Accord into concrete practice, so that the legal recognition of many ecclesial institutions may give them greater exposure, to the benefit not only of the Church but of Cameroon's society as a whole.

In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the considerable commitment of your local Churches to charitable works. This commitment in the domain of education, health and charity is recognized and appreciated by the Civil Authorities; it should lead to a fruitful collaboration between State and Church, respecting the full freedom of the latter. Engagement in charitable works is an integral part of evangelization, for there is a profound connection between evangelization and human advancement. This must be expressed and developed throughout the work of evangelization (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 178). Therefore, I encourage you, all those who devote themselves to it, especially members of religious institutes and lay associations, to persevere in your attention to the weaker members, by supporting them both materially and spiritually. I thank them with all my heart for their dedication and for their authentic witness to the love Christ bears for all human beings.

Your work of evangelization will be all the more effective if the Gospel is truly lived out by those who have received it and profess it. This is the way to attract to Christ all those who do not yet know him, by showing them the power of his loving capacity to transform and illuminate the lives of men and women. Only in this way can we face, vigilantly yet serenely, the development of multiple new propositions that seduce minds without renewing the depths of their hearts. Moreover, the large number of Muslims in some of your dioceses, is an urgent invitation to witness courageously and joyfully to your faith in the Risen Christ. To develop the dialogue of life with Muslims, in a spirit of mutual trust, is indispensable today in order to maintain a climate of peaceful coexistence, and to discourage the development of violence of which Christians are the victims in certain parts of the continent.

It seems to me essential, then, as a priority, to pursue your action aimed at implanting and strengthening the faith in the hearts of the faithful. Formation is an essential element in the development of the People of God, particularly in these times where relativism and secularization are beginning to take root in Africa. Many lay persons are involved in their parishes and in the movements, and they are indeed vital to the passing on of the faith. Their formation must be solid and ongoing. I ask you to convey to these lay faithful and to all involved in this work of formation my appreciation and my warmest encouragement. [...]

ADDRESS TO THE BISHOPS  
OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF CAMEROON  
ON THEIR "AD LIMINA" VISIT  
FRANCIS  
6 September 2014

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140906\\_ad-limina-camerun.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/september/documents/papa-francesco_20140906_ad-limina-camerun.html)

© Copyright 2014 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana



## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – JUNE

**That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.**



2. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him" (*Ps* 34:6). The Church has always understood the importance of this cry. We possess an outstanding testimony to this in the very first pages of the Acts of the Apostles, where Peter asks that seven men, "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3), be chosen for the ministry of caring for the poor. This is certainly one of the first signs of the entrance of the Christian community upon the world's stage: the service of the poor. The earliest community realized that being a disciple of Jesus meant demonstrating fraternity and solidarity, in obedience to the Master's proclamation that the poor are *blessed* and *heirs* to the Kingdom of heaven (cf. *Mt* 5:3).

"They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (*Acts* 2:45). In these words, we see clearly expressed the lively concern of the first Christians. The evangelist Luke, who more than any other speaks of mercy, does not exaggerate when he describes the practice of sharing in the early community. On the contrary, his words are addressed to believers in every generation, and thus also to us, in order to sustain our own witness and to encourage our care for those most in need. The same message is conveyed with similar conviction by the Apostle James. In his Letter, he spares no words: "Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you, and drag you into court? ... What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled', without giving them the things needed for the body; what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has not works, is dead' (2:5-6.14-17).

3. Yet there have been times when Christians have not fully heeded this appeal, and have assumed a worldly way of thinking. Yet the Holy Spirit has not failed to call them to keep their gaze fixed on what is essential. He has raised up men and women who, in a variety of ways, have devoted their lives to the service of the poor. Over these two thousand years, how many pages of history have been written by Christians who, in utter simplicity and humility, and with generous and creative charity, have served their poorest brothers and sisters!

The most outstanding example is that of Francis of Assisi, followed by many other holy men and women over the centuries. He was not satisfied to *embrace* lepers and give them *alms*, but chose to go to Gubbio to *stay* with them. He saw this meeting as the turning point of his conversion: "When I was in my sins, it seemed a thing too bitter to look on lepers, and the Lord himself led me among them and I showed them mercy. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of mind and body" (*Text 1-3: FF110*). This testimony shows the transformative power of charity and the Christian way of life.

We may think of the poor simply as the beneficiaries of our occasional volunteer work, or of impromptu acts of generosity that appease our conscience. However good and useful such acts may be for making us sensitive to people's needs and the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to lead to a true *encounter* with the poor and a *sharing* that becomes a way of life. Our prayer and our journey of discipleship and conversion find the confirmation of their evangelic authenticity in precisely such charity and sharing. This way of life gives rise to joy and peace of soul, because we touch with our own hands the *flesh of Christ*. If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist. The Body of Christ, broken in the sacred liturgy, can be seen, through charity and sharing, in the faces and persons of the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom's admonition remains ever timely: "If you want to honour the body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments, and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness" (*Hom. in Matthaeum*, 50.3: PG 58).

We are called, then, to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude. Their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts, and to acknowledge the value of poverty in itself.

6. At the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, I wanted to offer the Church a *World Day of the Poor*, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need. To the World Days instituted by my Predecessors, which are already a tradition in the life of our communities, I wish to add this one, which adds to them an exquisitely evangelical fullness, that is, Jesus' preferential love for the poor.

I invite the whole Church, and men and women of good will everywhere, to turn their gaze on this day to all those who stretch out their hands and plead for our help and solidarity. They are our brothers and sisters, created and loved by the one Heavenly Father. This *Day* is meant, above all, to encourage believers to react against a culture of discard and waste, and to embrace the culture of encounter. At the same time, everyone, independent of religious affiliation, is invited to openness and sharing with the poor through concrete signs of solidarity and fraternity. God created the heavens and the earth for all; yet sadly some have erected barriers, walls and fences, betraying the original gift meant for all humanity, with none excluded.

FIRST WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Francisco

19 November 2017



**See full message:**

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170613\\_messaggio-i-giornatamondiale-poveri-2017.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/papa-francesco_20170613_messaggio-i-giornatamondiale-poveri-2017.html)

© Copyright 2017 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## EVANGELIZATION INTENTION – JULY

**That those who administer justice may work with integrity, and that the injustice which prevails in the world may not have the last word.**



[...] I urge judges to carry out their vocation and their essential mission of establishing that justice without which there can be no order, or sustainable and integral development, or social peace. Undoubtedly, one of the greatest social ills of the world today is corruption at all levels, which weakens any government, participatory democracy itself and the wheels of justice. As judges, you are charged with administering justice. I ask you to be particularly concerned with justice in the areas of human trafficking and smuggling and, in the face of these evils and of organized crime, to avoid becoming entangled into the web of corruption.

As you well know, when we speak of "administering justice", this does not mean seeking punishment as an end in itself. Punishment must rather be directed to the re-education of wrongdoers, offering them hope for their eventual reinstatement in society. In other words, punishment should necessarily include hope. A narrow form of punishment that would exclude hope is torture rather than punishment. Based on this, I would reaffirm the position of the Church against the death penalty. It is true that, as I have been told, medieval and post-medieval theology considered the death penalty to entail hope: "we are handing them over to God". But times and situations have changed; let us allow God to choose the moment...

With regard to reinstatement in society, I would add that "not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this" (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 9). This subtle

interplay of justice and mercy, with a view to reinstatement, applies to those responsible for crimes against humanity as well as to every human being. It thus applies *a fortiori*, and in a particular way, to those victims who, as the term itself indicates, are more passive than active in the exercise of their freedom, having fallen into the clutches of today's new slave masters. All too often these victims are betrayed even in the most private and sacred aspect of their person, that is to say, in the love they aspire to give and receive. Their family owes it to them, and their suitors or husbands promise it, but then sell them into the forced labour and prostitution market, or the organ trade.

[...]

You are

called to give hope and to administer justice. Everyone, from the widow insistently demanding justice (Lk 18:1-8) to today's victims, longs for justice, trusting that the injustice so present in our world is not final, that it will not have the last word.

STATEMENT TO THE "JUDGES' SUMMIT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
AND ORGANIZED CRIME"

FRANCIS

3 June 2016

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160603\\_summit-giudici.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160603_summit-giudici.html)

© Copyright 2016 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – AUGUST

**That families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly “schools of true human development”.**



[...] The family is the interpersonal relationship par excellence, inasmuch as it is a communion of persons. Your relationships as spouses, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, make it possible for every person to find a place in the human family. The way to live out these relationships is dictated by communion, the driving force of true humanization and evangelization. Today more than ever, we see the need for a culture of encounter that can enhance unity in diversity, reciprocity and solidarity between generations. This “family capital” is called to impregnate the economic, social and political relationships of the European continent. The way of “being family” that you want to spread is not subject to any contingent ideology, but grounded in the inviolable dignity of the person. On the basis of that dignity, Europe will be able to be truly one family of peoples (cf. *Address to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg, 25 November 2014).

2. Crises of different types are presently springing up in Europe, not least in the institution of the family. But crises are incentives to work harder and better, with trust and hope.

I am familiar with your initiatives to promote concrete policies favouring the family in the areas of the economy and employment, and not only these, with the goal of procuring a dignified and fitting employment for all, especially the young, who in many areas of Europe endure the scourge of unemployment. In these initiatives, as well as in others directly related to the legislative field, concern for showing respect and for the dignity of each person should always prevail. In this sense, the culture of encounter always includes an attitude of dialogue in which listening is always necessary. May your dialogue be always based on actions, testimonies, experiences and lifestyles that speak more loudly than your speeches and programmes. This is indispensable for if families are

to play the role of “protagonists” to which my predecessor Saint John Paul II called them (*Familiaris Consortio*, 44).

Four crises in particular affect Europe at the present time: demographics – the “demographic winter” –, migration, employment and education. These crises might find positive outcomes precisely in the culture of encounter, if different social, economic and political actors were to join in shaping policies supportive of families. In these four areas, you are already working to propose answers tailored to families, seeing in the latter a resource and an ally for the person and his or her milieu. In this sense, your task very often will be to invite to a constructive dialogue with the various actors on the social scene, without concealing your Christian identity. Indeed, that identity will enable you always to look beyond appearances and the present moment. As you have clearly stressed, the culture of the ephemeral calls for an education for the future.

3. To carry out this demanding work, the family cannot remain isolated like a monad. Families need to go out from themselves; they need to dialogue and to encounter others, in order to build a unity that is not uniformity and that can generate progress and advance the common good.

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING PROMOTED BY THE  
FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE (FAFCE)  
FRANCIS  
1 June 2017

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170601\\_associazioni-familiari-cattoliche.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170601_associazioni-familiari-cattoliche.html)

© Copyright 2017 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – SEPTEMBER

**That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world's seas and oceans**



37. Some countries have made significant progress in establishing sanctuaries on land and in the oceans where any human intervention is prohibited which might modify their features or alter their original structures. In the protection of biodiversity, specialists insist on the need for particular attention to be shown to areas richer both in the number of species and in endemic, rare or less protected species. Certain places need greater protection because of their immense importance for the global ecosystem, or because they represent important water reserves and thus safeguard other forms of life.

40. Oceans not only contain the bulk of our planet's water supply, but also most of the immense variety of living creatures, many of them still unknown to us and threatened for various reasons. What is more, marine life in rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, which feeds a great part of the world's population, is affected by uncontrolled fishing, leading to a drastic depletion of certain species. Selective forms of fishing which discard much of what they collect continue unabated. Particularly threatened are marine organisms which we tend to overlook, like some forms of plankton; they represent a significant element in the ocean food chain, and species used for our food ultimately depend on them.

41. In tropical and subtropical seas, we find coral reefs comparable to the great forests on dry land, for they shelter approximately a million species, including fish, crabs, molluscs, sponges and algae. Many of the world's coral reefs are already barren or in a state of constant decline. "Who turned the



wonderworld of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of colour and life?”[25] This phenomenon is due largely to pollution which reaches the sea as the result of deforestation, agricultural monocultures, industrial waste and destructive fishing methods, especially those using cyanide and dynamite. It is aggravated by the rise in temperature of the oceans. All of this helps us to see that every intervention in nature can have consequences which are not immediately evident, and that certain ways of exploiting resources prove costly in terms of degradation which ultimately reaches the ocean bed itself.

42. Greater investment needs to be made in research aimed at understanding more fully the functioning of ecosystems and adequately analyzing the different variables associated with any significant modification of the environment. Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family. This will require undertaking a careful inventory of the species which it hosts, with a view to developing programmes and strategies of protection with particular care for safeguarding species heading towards extinction.

174. Let us also mention the system of governance of the oceans. International and regional conventions do exist, but fragmentation and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalization end up undermining these efforts. The growing problem of marine waste and the protection of the open seas represent particular challenges. What is needed, in effect, is an agreement on systems of governance for the whole range of so-called “global commons”.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

LAUDATO SI’

FRANCIS

24 May 2015

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

© Copyright 2015 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## EVANGELIZATION INTENTION – OCTOBER

**That the breath of the Holy Spirit engender a new missionary spring in the Church**



The Spirit frees hearts chained by fear. He overcomes all resistance. To those content with half measures he inspires whole-hearted generosity. He opens hearts that are closed. He impels the comfortable to go out and serve. He drives the self-satisfied to set out in new directions. He makes the lukewarm thrill to new dreams. That is what it means to change hearts. Plenty of people promise change, new beginnings, prodigious renewals, but experience teaches us that no earthly attempt to change reality can ever completely satisfy the human heart. Yet the change that the Spirit brings is different. It does not revolutionize life around us, but changes our hearts. It does not free us from the weight of our problems, but liberates us *within* so that we can face them. It does not give us everything at once, but makes us press on confidently, never growing weary of life. The Spirit keeps our hearts young – a renewed youth. Youth, for all our attempts to prolong it, sooner or later fades away; the Spirit, instead, prevents the only kind of aging that is unhealthy: namely, growing old within. How does he do this? By renewing our hearts, by pardoning sinners. Here is the great change: from guilty he makes us righteous and thus changes everything. From slaves of sin we become free, from servants we become beloved children, from worthless worthy, from disillusioned filled with hope. By the working of the Holy Spirit, joy is reborn and peace blossoms in our hearts.

Today, then, let us learn what to do when we are in need of real change. And who among us does not need a change? Particularly when we are downcast, wearied by life's burdens, oppressed by our own weakness, at those times when it is hard to keep going and loving seems impossible. In those moments, we need a powerful "jolt": the Holy Spirit, the power of God. In the Creed we profess that he is the "giver of life". How good it would be for us each day to feel this jolt of life! To say when we wake up each morning: "Come, Holy Spirit, come into my heart, come into my day".

The Spirit does not only change hearts; he *changes situations*. Like the wind that blows everywhere, he penetrates to the most unimaginable situations. In the Acts of the Apostles – a book we need to pick up and read, whose main character is the Holy Spirit – we are caught up in an amazing series of events. When the disciples least expect it, the Holy Spirit sends them out to the pagans. He opens up new paths, as in the episode of the deacon Philip. The Spirit drives Philip to a desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza... (How heartrending that name sounds to us today! May the Spirit change hearts and situations and bring peace to the Holy Land!) Along the way, Philip preaches to an Ethiopian court official and baptizes him. Then the Spirit brings him to Azotus, and then on to Caesarea, in constantly new situations, to spread the newness of God. Then too, there is Paul, “compelled by the Spirit” (*Acts* 20:22), who travels far and wide, bringing the Gospel to peoples he had never seen. Where the Spirit is, something is always happening; where he blows, things are never calm.

When, in the life of our communities, we experience a certain “listlessness”, when we prefer peace and quiet to the newness of God, it is a bad sign. It means that we are trying to find shelter from the wind of the Spirit. When we live for self-preservation and keep close to home, it is not a good sign. The Spirit blows, but we lower our sails. And yet, how often have we seen him work wonders! Frequently, even in the bleakest of times, the Spirit has raised up the most outstanding holiness! Because he is the soul of the Church, who constantly enlivens her with renewed hope, fills her with joy, makes her fruitful, and causes new life to blossom. In a family, when a new baby is born, it upsets our schedules, it makes us lose sleep, but it also brings us a joy that renews our lives, driving us on, expanding us in love. So it is with the Spirit: he brings a “taste of childhood” to the Church. Time and time again he gives new birth. He revives our first love. The Spirit reminds the Church that, for all her centuries of history, she is always the youthful bride with whom the Lord is madly in love. Let us never tire of welcoming the Spirit into our lives, of invoking him before everything we do: “Come, Holy Spirit!”

He will bring his power of change, a unique power that is, so to say, both *centripetal and centrifugal*. It is centripetal, that is, it seeks the centre, because it works deep within our hearts. It brings unity amid division, peace amid affliction, strength amid temptations. Paul reminds us of this in the second reading, when he writes that the fruits of the Spirit are joy, peace, faithfulness and self-control (cf. *Ga*/5:22). The Spirit grants intimacy with God, the inner strength to keep going. Yet, at the same time, he is a centrifugal force, that is, one pushing outward. The one who centres us is also the one who drives us to the peripheries, to every human periphery. The one who reveals God also opens our hearts to our brothers and sisters. He sends us, he makes us witnesses, and so he pours out on us – again in the words of Paul – love, kindness, generosity and gentleness. Only in the Consoler Spirit do we speak words of life and truly encourage others. Those who live by the Spirit live in this constant spiritual tension: they find themselves pulled both *towards God and towards the world*.

Let us ask him to make us live in exactly that way. Holy Spirit, violent wind of God, blow upon us, blow into our hearts and make us breathe forth the tenderness of the Father! Blow upon the Church and impel her to the ends of the earth, so that, brought by you, she may bring nothing other than you. Blow upon our world the soothing warmth of peace and the refreshing cool of hope. Come Holy Spirit, change us within and renew the face of the earth. Amen.

HOLY MASS ON THE SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

FRANCIS

20 May 2018

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180520\\_omelia-pentecoste.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180520_omelia-pentecoste.html)

© Copyright 2018 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## UNIVERSAL INTENTION – NOVEMBER

**That a spirit of dialogue, encounter, and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.**



I am pleased to meet with you today in the course of my visit to your country. I thank the President of this distinguished office for his cordial invitation which affords me the opportunity to share these moments with political and religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian.

It is a tradition that Popes, when they visit different countries as part of their mission, meet also with the leaders and members of various religions. Without this openness to encounter and dialogue, a Papal Visit would not fully correspond to its purposes. And so I have wished to meet you, following in the footsteps of my venerable predecessors. In this context, I am pleased to recall in a special way Pope Benedict XVI's visit to this very same place in November 2006.

Good relations and dialogue between religious leaders have, in fact, acquired great importance. They represent a clear message addressed to their respective communities which demonstrates that mutual respect and friendship are possible, notwithstanding differences. Such friendship, as well as being valuable in itself, becomes all the more meaningful and important in a time of crises such as our own, crises which in some parts of the world are disastrous for entire peoples.

Wars cause the death of innocent victims and bring untold destruction, interethnic and interreligious tensions and conflicts, hunger and poverty afflicting hundreds of millions of people, and inflict damage on the natural environment – air, water and land.

Especially tragic is the situation in the Middle East, above all in Iraq and Syria. Everyone suffers the consequences of these conflicts, and the humanitarian situation is unbearable. I think of so many



children, the sufferings of so many mothers, of the elderly, of those displaced and of all refugees, subject to every form of violence. Particular concern arises from the fact that, owing mainly to an extremist and fundamentalist group, entire communities, especially – though not exclusively – Christians and Yazidis, have suffered and continue to suffer barbaric violence simply because of their ethnic and religious identity. They have been forcibly evicted from their homes, having to leave behind everything to save their lives and preserve their faith. This violence has also brought damage to sacred buildings, monuments, religious symbols and cultural patrimony, as if trying to erase every trace, every memory of the other.

As religious leaders, we are obliged to denounce all violations against human dignity and human rights. Human life, a gift of God the Creator, possesses a sacred character. As such, any violence which seeks religious justification warrants the strongest condemnation because the Omnipotent is the God of life and peace. The world expects those who claim to adore God to be men and women of peace who are capable of living as brothers and sisters, regardless of ethnic, religious, cultural or ideological differences.

As well as denouncing such violations, we must also work together to find adequate solutions. This requires the cooperation of all: governments, political and religious leaders, representatives of civil society, and all men and women of goodwill. In a unique way, religious leaders can offer a vital contribution by expressing the values of their respective traditions. We, Muslims and Christians, are the bearers of spiritual treasures of inestimable worth. Among these we recognize some shared elements, though lived according to the traditions of each, such as the adoration of the All-Merciful God, reference to the Patriarch Abraham, prayer, almsgiving, fasting... elements which, when lived sincerely, can transform life and provide a sure foundation for dignity and fraternity. Recognizing and developing our common spiritual heritage – through interreligious dialogue – helps us to promote and to uphold moral values, peace and freedom in society (cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Catholic Community in Ankara*, 29 November 1979). The shared recognition of the sanctity of each human life is the basis of joint initiatives of solidarity, compassion, and effective help directed to those who suffer most. In this regard, I wish to express my appreciation for everything that the Turkish people, Muslims and Christians alike, are doing to help the hundreds of thousands of people who are fleeing their countries due to conflicts. There are two million of them. This is a clear example of how we can work together to serve others, an example to be encouraged and maintained.

I wish also to express my satisfaction at the good relations which exist between the *Diyanet* and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. It is my earnest desire that these relations will continue and be strengthened for the good of all, so that every initiative which promotes authentic dialogue will offer a sign of hope to a world which so deeply needs peace, security and prosperity. Following my meeting with the President, I am also hopeful that this interreligious dialogue will take on creative new forms.

Mr President, I renew my gratitude to you and your colleagues for this meeting, which fills my heart with joy. I am grateful also to each one of you, for your presence and for your prayers which, in your kindness, you offer for me and my ministry. For my part, I assure you of my prayers. May the Lord grant us all his blessing.

VISIT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE DIYANET  
AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
FRANCIS  
28 November 2014

**See full message:**



[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco\\_20141128\\_turchia-presidenza-diyanet.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141128_turchia-presidenza-diyanet.html)

© Copyright 2014 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## EVANGELIZATION INTENTION – DECEMBER

**That every country determine to take the necessary measures to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.**



1. Too often we talk about young people without allowing ourselves to be challenged by them. When someone wants to launch a campaign or something, they say, ah, let us commend the young! — it is true, isn't it? — but they do not allow young people to challenge them. Dispensing praise is a way of satisfying people. But people are not silly or stupid. No they are not. People understand. Only fools do not understand. In Spanish there is a beautiful saying: "Praise the fool and you will see him work". Give him a pat on the shoulder and he will be happy, because he is a fool; he does not realize. But you are not fools! Even the best analyses focusing on the world of youth, while useful — they are useful — do not supplant the need for face-to-face encounter. They speak about today's youth. Out of curiosity, look up how many articles, how many conferences, talk about today's youth. I would like to tell you one thing: youth does not exist! There are young people, stories, faces, glances, illusions. Young people exist. Talking about youth is easy. Abstractions, percentages are used ... No. Your face, your heart, what does it say? Conversing with, listening to the young. Sometimes, obviously, young people are not Nobel laureates in prudence. No. Sometimes they speak bluntly. Life is like that, but you have to listen to them.

Some might think it would be easier to keep you at "a safe distance", so as not to be provoked by you. But it is not enough to exchange the odd message, or share nice photographs. Young people must be taken seriously! It seems we are surrounded by a culture that, on the one hand idolizes youth, trying to prevent its passing, yet on the other it excludes many young people from being protagonists. It is a cosmetic philosophy. People age and try to apply makeup to seem younger, but they do not allow young people to grow. This is very common. Why? Because they do not allow themselves to be challenged. It is important. Often you are marginalized from ordinary public life and you find yourself begging for jobs that do not guarantee you a future. I do not know if this

happens in all your countries, but in many... If I am not mistaken, the rate of youth unemployment here in Italy, for those 25 years of age and over, is around 35%. In another European country bordering Italy, it is 47%. In another European country near Italy, it is more than 50%. What can a young person do if he or she cannot find work? He becomes ill — sinks into depression, addiction; he commits suicide. It makes us think: the statistics on youth suicide are all manipulated, all of them; he becomes a rebel — but it is a way of committing suicide — either he takes a plane and goes to a city I do not want to name and enrolls in isis, or he joins one of those guerrilla movements. At least it gives some sense to life and he'll have a monthly wage. And this is a social sin! Society is responsible for this. But I would like you to outline the causes and what the reasons for them are, and do not say, "I don't really know why either". How do you experience this dramatic situation? It would help us greatly. Too often you are left alone. But the truth is also the fact that you are builders of culture, with your style and your originality. It is a relative distance, as you are capable of building a culture that perhaps cannot be seen, but which goes forth. We want this space [of encounter] in order to hear about your culture, about what you are building.

In the Church — I am convinced — it should not be this way: closing the door, without listening. The Gospel asks us: its message of closeness invites us to encounter and exchange, to accept and love each other seriously, to journey together and to share without fear. And this Pre-Synodal Meeting should be a sign of something great: the Church's willingness to listen to all the young, without exclusion. And this is not a political ploy. It is not out of an artificial "pro-youth", no, but because we need to better understand what God and history are asking of us. If you are not present, then a part of the access to God is missing.

PRE-SYNODAL MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

AT THE INTERNATIONAL PONTIFICAL COLLEGE "MARIA MATER ECCLESIAE"

FRANCIS

19 March 2018

**See full message:**

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180319\\_visita-pcimme.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/march/documents/papa-francesco_20180319_visita-pcimme.html)

© Copyright 2018 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana