

CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH • 2020 •

PRAYER INTENTION FOR EVANGELIZATION

JANUARY

"We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

INTERRELIGIOUS MEETING APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES¹ Francis 4 February 2019

[...] Fraternity certainly "also embraces variety and differences between brothers and sisters, even though they are linked by birth and are of the same nature and dignity".[2] Religious plurality is an expression of this; in such a context the right attitude is neither a forced uniformity nor a conciliatory syncretism. What we are called to do as believers is to commit ourselves to the equal dignity of all, in the name of the Merciful One who created us and in whose name the reconciliation of conflicts and fraternity in diversity must be sought. Here I want to reaffirm the conviction of the Catholic Church: "We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God".[3]

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_emiratiarabi-incontrointerreligioso.html

¹ See full message:

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Various questions, however, confront us: how do we look after each other in the one human family? How do we nourish a fraternity which is not theoretical but translates into authentic fraternity? How can the inclusion of the other prevail over exclusion in the name of belonging to one's own group? How, in short, can religions be channels of fraternity rather than barriers of separation? [...]

There is no alternative: we will either build the future together or there will not be a future. Religions, in particular, cannot renounce the urgent task of building bridges between peoples and cultures. The time has come when religions should more actively exert themselves, with courage and audacity, and without pretence, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope and the concrete paths of peace. [...]

The world's religions also have the task of reminding us that greed for profit renders the heart lifeless and that the laws of the current market, demanding everything immediately, do not benefit encounter, dialogue, family – essential dimensions of life that need time and patience. Religions should be the voice of the least, who are not statistics but brothers and sisters, and should stand on the side of the poor. They should keep watch as sentinels of fraternity in the night of conflict. They should be vigilant warnings to humanity not to close our eyes in the face of injustice and never to resign ourselves to the many tragedies in the world.

FEBRUARY

"We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal human smuggling and human trafficking, may be heard and considered."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

MESSAGE FOR THE "SECOND HOLY SEE-MEXICO CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION"² Francis
14 June 2018

In order to acknowledge and respond to the current migration situation, the assistance of the entire international community is needed, since its transnational dimension exceeds the capacities and resources of many States. Such international cooperation is important at every stage of migration: from departing one's country of origin all the way to reaching one's destination, as well as facilitating reentry and transit. In each of these countries, migrants are vulnerable, feeling alone and isolated. The recognition of this fact is vitally important if we wish to give a concrete and dignified response to this humanitarian challenge.

Finally, I would like to point out that the issue of migration is not simply one of numbers, but of persons, each with his or her own history, culture, feelings and aspirations... These persons, our brothers and sisters, need "ongoing protection", independently of whatever migrant status they may have. Their fundamental rights and their dignity need to be protected and defended. Particular concern must be shown for migrant children and their families, those who are victims of human trafficking rings, and those displaced due to conflicts, natural disasters and persecution. All of them hope that we will have the courage to tear down the wall of "comfortable and silent

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² See full message:

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complicity" that worsens their helplessness; they are waiting for us to show them concern, compassion and devotion.

EVANGELIZATION PRAYER INTENTION

MARCH

"We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

MESSAGE TO THE CATHOLICS OF CHINA AND TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH³ Francis 26 September 2018

- 1. Of late, many conflicting reports have circulated about the present and, in particular, the future of the Catholic communities in China. I am aware that this flurry of thoughts and opinions may have caused a certain confusion and prompted different reactions in the hearts of many. Some feel doubt and perplexity, while others sense themselves somehow abandoned by the Holy See and anxiously question the value of their sufferings endured out of fidelity to the Successor of Peter. In many others, there prevail positive expectations and reflections inspired by the hope of a more serene future for a fruitful witness to the faith in China.
- [...] I would have you know that, from the time I was entrusted with the Petrine ministry, I have experienced great consolation in knowing the heartfelt desire of Chinese Catholics to live their faith in full communion with the universal Church and with the Successor of Peter, who is "the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful" (SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, 23). In these years, I have received numerous concrete signs and testimonies of that desire, including from bishops who have damaged communion in the Church as a result of weakness and errors, but also, and not infrequently, due to powerful and undue pressure from without.

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³ See full message:

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6. On the pastoral level, the Catholic community in China is called to be united, so as to overcome the divisions of the past that have caused, and continue to cause great suffering in the hearts of many pastors and faithful. All Christians, none excluded, must now offer gestures of reconciliation and communion. In this regard, let us keep in mind the admonition of Saint John of the Cross: "In the evening of life, we will be judged on love" (Dichos, 64).

APRIL

"We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied"



INTENTION COMMENTARY

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS: AN OBSTACLE TO INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT" Francis

1 December 2018

[...] In these days, you have discussed issues and problems linked to the troubling phenomenon of narcotics and other forms of addiction, old and new, which pose an obstacle to integral human development. Communities everywhere are challenged by current social and cultural changes and by pathologies derived from a secularized climate marked by consumerist capitalism, self-sufficiency, a loss of values, an existential void, and a weakening of bonds and relationships. Drug addiction, as has often been pointed out, is an open wound in our society; its victims, once ensnared, exchange their freedom for enslavement to a dependency that we can define as chemical.

Drug use is gravely harmful to health, human life and society, as you well know. All of us are called to combat the production, processing and distribution of drugs worldwide. It is the duty and responsibility of governments courageously to undertake this fight against those who deal in death. Dealers of death: we must not be afraid to use this title. An area of increasing risk is virtual space; on some Internet sites, young people, and not only the young, are lured into a bondage hard to escape, leading to a loss of life's meaning and, at times, even of life itself. Faced with this disturbing scenario, the Church senses the urgent need to create in today's world a form of humanism capable of restoring the human person to the centre of social, economic and cultural life: a humanism grounded in the "Gospel of Mercy". There the disciples of Jesus find the inspiration for a pastoral

⁴ See full message:

 $[\]underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/december/documents/papa-francesco_20181201_conferenza-droga.html}$

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action that can prove truly effective in alleviating, caring for and healing the immense suffering associated with different kinds of addiction present in our world. $[\ldots]$

PRAYER INTENTION FOR EVANGELIZATION

MAY

"We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

PASTORAL TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MILAN ENCOUNTER WITH PRIESTS AND CONSECRATED PERSONS IN THE DUOMO⁵ Francis
25 March 2017

[...] The diaconate is a specific vocation, a family vocation that requires service. I like it very much when [in the Acts of the Apostles] the first Hellenistic Christians went to the apostles to complain because their widows and orphans were not well cared for, and they had a meeting, that "synod" between apostles and disciples, and they "invented" the deacons to serve. And this is very interesting for us bishops too, because they were all bishops, those who "made" the deacons. And what does this tell us? That deacons were servants. Then they understood that, in that case, it was to assist widows and orphans: but to serve. And to us as bishops: prayer and the proclamation of the Word; and this shows us what the most important charism of a bishop is: to pray. What is the task of a bishop, the first task? Prayer. Second task: proclaiming the Word. But you can see the difference clearly. And for you [deacons]: service. This word is the key to understanding your charism. Service as one of the characteristic gifts of the people of God. The deacon is, so to say, the custodian of service in the Church. Every word must be carefully measured. You are the guardians of service in the Church: service to the Word, service to the Altar, service to the poor. And your mission, the mission of the deacon, and your contribution consist in this: in reminding us all that faith, in its various expressions – community liturgy, personal prayer, the various forms of charity – and in its various states of life – lay, clerical, family – possesses an essential dimension of service. Service to God and to brothers. And how far we have to go in this sense! You are the guardians of service in the Church.

⁵ See full message:

https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/03/25/170325c.html

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Therein lies the value of the charisms in the Church, which are a memory and a gift for helping all the people of God not to lose the perspective and wealth of God's action. You are not half priests, half laypeople – this would be to "functionalize" the diaconate – you are the sacrament of service to God and to others. And from this word "service" there derives all the development of your work, of your vocation, of your being within the Church. A vocation that, like all vocations is not only individual, but lived within the family and with the family; within the People of God and with the People of God. [...]

PRAYER INTENTION FOR EVANGELIZATION

JUNE

"We pray that all those who suffer may find their way in life, allowing themselves to be touched by the Heart of Jesus."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY PRAYER VIGIL TO "DRY THE TEARS"⁶ MEDITATION Francis 5 May 2016

[...] At times of sadness, suffering and sickness, amid the anguish of persecution and grief, everyone looks for a word of consolation. We sense a powerful need for someone to be close and feel compassion for us. We experience what it means to be disoriented, confused, more heartsick than we ever thought possible. We look around us with uncertainty, trying to see if we can find someone who really understands our pain. Our mind is full of questions but answers do not come. Reason by itself is not capable of making sense of our deepest feelings, appreciating the grief we experience and providing the answers we are looking for. At times like these, more than ever do we need the reasons of the heart, which alone can help us understand the mystery which embraces our loneliness.

How much sadness we see in so many faces all around us! How many tears are shed every second in our world; each is different but together they form, as it were, an ocean of desolation that cries out for mercy, compassion and consolation. The bitterest tears are those caused by human evil: the tears of those who have seen a loved one violently torn from them; the tears of grandparents, mothers and fathers, children; eyes that keep staring at the sunset and find it hard to see the dawn of a new day. We need the mercy, the consolation that comes from

⁶ See full message:

 $[\]underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160505_veglia-asciugare-lacrime.html}$

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the Lord. All of us need it. This is our poverty but also our grandeur: to plead for the consolation of God, who in his tenderness comes to wipe the tears from our eyes (cf. Is 25:8; Rev 7:17; 21:4). [...]

In the moment of confusion, dismay and tears, Christ's heart turned in prayer to the Father. Prayer is the true medicine for our suffering. In prayer, we too can feel God's presence. The tenderness of his gaze comforts us; the power of his word supports us and gives us hope. [...]

JULY

"We pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

ADDRESS TO THE DELEGATION OF THE FORUM OF FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS⁷ Francis
16 June 2018

Our world, often tempted and guided by individualistic and selfish reasoning, often loses the meaning and the beauty of stable bonds, of commitment to people, of unconditional care, of assuming responsibility for the good of the other, of gratuitousness and of self-giving. For this reason one has difficulty in comprehending the value of the family, and one ends up understanding it according to the same reasoning that privileges individual interests instead of relationships and the common good. And this is despite the fact that in the recent years of economic crisis the family has represented the most powerful shock absorber, capable of redistributing resources according to the needs of each person.

On the contrary, full recognition and appropriate support of the family should be the top priority of civil institutions, called to promote the formation of sound, serene families who attend to their children's education and who compensate for situations of weakness. Indeed, those who learn to experience authentic relationships in the sphere of the family will be better able to exercise them in the broadest contexts, from school to the world of work; and those who practice it in a spirit of respect and service at home, will be better able to practice it also in society and in the world.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180616_forum-associazioni-familiari.html

⁷ See full message:

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Now, the objective of stronger support for families and a more appropriate appreciation of them, should be reached through a tireless effort toward raising awareness and dialogue. This is the task that the Forum has carried out for 25 years, in which you have accomplished a great deal of initiatives, establishing a relationship of trust and cooperation with the institutions. I exhort you to continue this work, by promoting projects which demonstrate the beauty of the family, and which are attractive because they are convincing, since their importance and value are evident.

Thus I encourage you to witness to the joy of love, which I explained in the Apostolic Exhortation <u>Amoris Laetitia</u>, where I harvested the fruits of the providential journey of the Synod on the Family, which was carried out by the whole Church. Indeed, there is no better subject than joy which, radiating from the inside, proves the value of ideas and experience and points to the treasure that we have discovered and wish to share.

AUGUST

"We pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING FOR CHAPLAINS AND VOLUNTEERS OF THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA® FRANCIS
27 June 2019

Since more than ninety percent of world commerce is transported by ships of various kinds, the dependence of our society on the maritime industry is indisputable. Without sailors, the global economy would come to a standstill; and without fishermen, many parts of the world would starve. I would ask you to convey my esteem and encouragement to the sailors and fishermen whom you meet, many of whom work for lengthy periods of time, thousands of miles away from their native land and their families.

The life of a sailor or fisherman is not only marked by isolation and distance. At times, it is also painfully affected by shameful experiences of abuse and injustice, by the snares of those engaged in human trafficking, and by the extortion of forced labour. At other times, they are not paid their rightful salary or are left behind in distant ports. In addition to threats from nature – storms and hurricanes – they must face human threats, such as piracy or terrorist attacks. They cross the world's oceans and seas, landing in ports where they are not always welcome. [...]

[...] I encourage you and the chaplains and volunteers of Stella Maris to redouble your efforts to confront issues that are all too often the fruit of human greed. I am thinking of human trafficking, forced labour and violations of

⁸ See full message:

 $[\]underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190627_apostolato-delmare.html}$

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the human and labour rights of so many men and women who live and work on the seas. Through your service, you can help restore to these persons their sense of dignity.

In addition, thanks to you, those who are most vulnerable can find hope for a better future. Your efforts can help them not to give up in the face of a life that is precarious and at times marked by exploitation. Your presence in the ports, large and small, is already a sign of God's fatherhood and the fact that, in his eyes, we are all children, brothers and sisters to one another. Your presence is also a sign of the primordial worth of the human person, prior to and above every other interest, and an incentive for everyone, starting with the poorest, to work for justice and respect for fundamental rights. Let us remember that "men and women who are made new by the love of God are able to change the rules and quality of relationships, transforming even social structures. They are people capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails the exploitation of man by man. Only love is capable of radically transforming the relationships that men maintain among themselves" (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 4).

SEPTEMBER

"We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

GENERAL AUDIENCE⁹ Francis 7 November 2018

The Social Doctrine of the Church speaks of the universal destination of goods. What does it mean? Let us listen to what the Catechism says: "In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race" (n. 2402). Moreover: "The universal destination of goods remains primordial, even if the promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise" (n. 2403).[1]

Providence, however, did not create a world 'of series'; there are differences, different conditions, different cultures, so one can live by providing for one another. The world is rich in resources to ensure the basic necessities for everyone. Yet many live in scandalous indigence and resources, used indiscriminately, are dwindling. But there is only one world! There is only one humanity![2] Today the world's wealth is in the hands of the minority, of the few, and poverty, or rather misery and suffering, is in those of the many, of the majority.

If there is hunger on earth it is not for lack of food! Rather, due to market demands it is at times even destroyed, wasted. What is lacking is free and forward-looking entrepreneurship, which ensures proper production in a solidary framework, which ensures equitable distribution. The Catechism also states: "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself" (n. 2404). All wealth, in order to be good, must have a social dimension.

⁹ See full message:

 $[\]underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20181107_udienza-generale.html}$

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PRAYER INTENTION FOR EVANGELIZATION

OCTOBER

"We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

HOLY MASS WITH BISHOPS, CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS OF PENNSYLVANIA¹⁰ Francis 26 September 2015

One of the great challenges facing the Church in this generation is to foster in all the faithful a sense of personal responsibility for the Church's mission, and to enable them to fulfill that responsibility as missionary disciples, as a leaven of the Gospel in our world. This will require creativity in adapting to changed situations, carrying forward the legacy of the past not primarily by maintaining our structures and institutions, which have served us well, but above all by being open to the possibilities which the Spirit opens up to us and communicating the joy of the Gospel, daily and in every season of our life.

"What about you?" It is significant that these words of the elderly Pope were also addressed to a lay woman. We know that the future of the Church in a rapidly changing society will call, and even now calls, for a much more active engagement on the part of the laity. The Church in the United States has always devoted immense effort to the work of catechesis and education. Our challenge today is to build on those solid foundations and to foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility in planning for the future of our parishes and institutions. This does not mean relinquishing the spiritual authority with which we have been entrusted; rather, it means discerning and employing wisely the manifold gifts which the Spirit pours out upon the Church. In a particular way, it means valuing the immense contribution which women, lay and religious, have made and continue to make, in the life of our communities.

¹⁰ See full message:

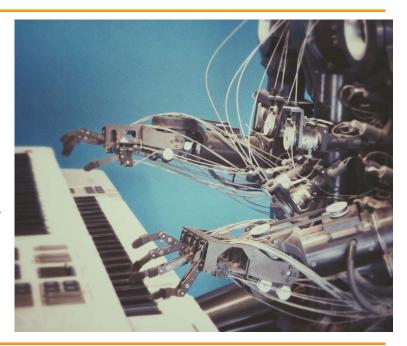
 $[\]underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150926_usa-omelia-philadelphia.html}$

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Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for the way in which each of you has answered Jesus' question which inspired your own vocation: "What about you?". I encourage you to be renewed in the joy and wonder of that first encounter with Jesus, and to draw from that joy renewed fidelity and strength.

NOVEMBER

"We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY ASSEMBLYOF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE Francis
25 February 2019¹¹

It is important to reiterate: "Artificial intelligence, robotics and other technological innovations must be so employed that they contribute to the service of humanity and to the protection of our common home, rather than to the contrary, as some assessments unfortunately foresee" (Message to the World Economic Forum in Davos, 12 January 2018). The inherent dignity of every human being must be firmly placed at the center of our reflection and action. In this regard, it should be noted that the designation of "artificial intelligence", although certainly effective, may risk being misleading. The terms conceal the fact that – in spite of the useful fulfilment of servile tasks (this is the original meaning of the term "robot"), functional automatisms remain qualitatively distant from the human prerogatives of knowledge and action. And therefore they can become socially dangerous. Moreover, the risk of man being "technologized", rather than technology humanized, is already real: so-called "intelligent machines" are hastily attributed capacities that are properly human.

We need to understand better what intelligence, conscience, emotionality, affective intentionality and autonomy of moral action mean in this context. Indeed, artificial devices that simulate human capabilities are devoid of human quality. This must be taken into account to guide the regulation of their use, and research itself, towards a constructive and equitable interaction between human beings and the latest versions of machines. Indeed

 $\underline{\text{http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco_20190225_plenaria-accademia-vita.html}$

¹¹ See full message:

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these spread throughout our world and radically transform the scenario of our existence. If we can also make these references bear weight also in action, the extraordinary potential of the new discoveries may radiate their benefits on every person and on the whole of humanity.

PRAYER INTENTION FOR EVANGELIZATION

DECEMBER

"We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer."



INTENTION COMMENTARY

GENERAL AUDIENCE¹² Francis 15 November 2017

What truly is prayer? It is first of all a dialogue, a personal relationship with God. Man was created as a being in a personal relationship with God who finds his complete fulfillment only in the encounter with his Creator. The path of life leads toward the definitive encounter with the Lord.

Pausing in silence with Jesus. From this mysterious silence of God springs his Word which resonates in our heart. Jesus himself teaches us how it is truly possible to "be" with the Father and he shows us this with his prayer. The Gospels show us Jesus who withdraws to secluded places to pray; seeing his intimate relationship with God, the disciples feel the desire to be able to take part in it, and they ask him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1).

In our relationship with the Lord, in prayer — I ask — do we let ourselves be astonished or do we think that prayer is speaking with God as parrots do? No, it is trusting and opening the heart so as to let ourselves be astonished. Do we allow ourselves to be surprised by God who is always the God of surprises? Because the encounter with the Lord is always a living encounter; it is not a museum encounter. It is a living encounter, and we go to Mass, not to a museum. We go to a living encounter with the Lord.

¹² See full message:

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