



PRAYER AND SERVICE CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH • 2022 •

For true human fraternity

JANUARY

“We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ENCYCLICAL LETTER
FRATELLI TUTTI¹
Francis
3 October 2020

8. It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. “Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together”.^[6] Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.

¹ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

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128. If the conviction that all human beings are brothers and sisters is not to remain an abstract idea but to find concrete embodiment, then numerous related issues emerge, forcing us to see things in a new light and to develop new responses.

131. For those who are not recent arrivals and already participate in the fabric of society, it is important to apply the concept of "citizenship", which "is based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice. It is therefore crucial to establish in our societies the concept of *full citizenship* and to reject the discriminatory use of the term *minorities*, which engenders feelings of isolation and inferiority. Its misuse paves the way for hostility and discord; it undoes any successes and takes away the religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against".[\[112\]](#)

271. The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between the followers of different religions does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. In the words of the Bishops of India, "the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love".[\[259\]](#)

281. A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. "God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised".[\[278\]](#)

282. It follows that "we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... For the deeper, stronger and richer our own identity is, the more we will be capable of enriching others with our own proper contribution".[\[279\]](#) We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbour, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion.

January 2021

<https://thepopevideo.org/at-the-service-of-human-fraternity/>

March 2019

<https://thepopevideo.org/recognition-of-the-right-of-christian-communities/>

November 2016

<https://thepopevideo.org/countries-receiving-refugees/>



For religious sisters and
consecrated women

FEBRUARY

“We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF SUPERIORS GENERAL (UISG)²

Francis

12 May 2016

All women religious, all consecrated women should live mystically, because yours is a marriage: your is a vocation of maternity; it is a vocation of acting on behalf of Mother Church and of Mother Mary. But those who tell you this, they think that being a mystic is being a mummy, always praying like that... No, no. You have to pray and to work according to your own charism, and when the charism leads you to work with refugees, to work with the poor, you should do it, and they will call you “communist”; that’s the least of what they will say about you. But you should do it. Because the charism leads you to this. In Argentina, I remember a sister, she was provincial of her congregation. A good woman, and she’s still working... she’s nearly my age, yes. And she works against those who traffic youngsters, who traffic people. I remember, under the military government in Argentina, they wanted to put her in jail, putting pressure on the Archbishop, putting pressure on the Provincial Superior, before she became provincial, “because this woman is a communist.” And this woman saved so many girls, so many girls! And yes, that’s the Cross. What did they say about Jesus? That he was Beelzebub, that he had the power of Beelzebub. Calumny: be prepared for it. If you do good, with prayer, before God, taking on all the consequences of your charism and you go forward, prepare yourselves for defamation and calumny, because the Lord chose this way for himself!

² See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/may/documents/papa-francesco_20160512_uisg.html

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And we bishops must protect these women who are an icon of the Church, when they do difficult things, and are slandered and persecuted. To be persecuted is the last of the Beatitudes. The Lord said: "Blessed are you when you are persecuted, insulted", and all of these things. But here the danger can be: "I get on with my thing"; no, no, listen now: when they persecute you – speak. With your community, with your superior, speak with everyone, ask for advice, discern: once again this word. And this sister of whom I was speaking now, one day I found her crying, and she said, "Look at the letter I received from Rome – I won't say from where – what must I do?" – "Are you a daughter of the Church?" "Yes!" – "Do you want to obey the Church?" – "Yes!" – "Answer that you will be obedient to the Church, then go to your superior, go to your community, go to your bishop – that was me – and the Church will tell you what to do. But not a letter that comes from 12,000 kilometres away". Because someone close to the sister's enemies had written, and she had been slandered. Be courageous, but with humility, discernment, prayer, dialogue.

October 2018

<https://thepopevideo.org/the-mission-of-religious/>



For a Christian response to
bioethical challenges

MARCH

**“We pray for Christians
facing new bioethical
challenges; may they
continue to defend the
dignity of all human life with
prayer and action”.**



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE
FOR THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACADEMY³

Francis

6 January 2019

10. We know that the threshold of basic respect for human life is being crossed, and brutally at that, not only by instances of individual conduct but also by the effects of societal choices and structures. Business strategies and the pace of technological growth now, as never before, condition biomedical research, educational priorities, investment decisions and the quality of interpersonal relationships. The possibility of directing economic development and scientific progress towards the covenant between man and woman, towards caring for our common humanity and towards the dignity of the human person, surely arises from a love for creation that faith helps us to deepen and illuminate. The prospect of a global bioethics, with a broad vision and a concern for the impact of the environment on life and health, offers a significant opportunity for strengthening the new covenant between the Gospel and creation.

12. Another area calling for study is that of the new technologies described as “emergent” and “convergent.” These include information and communication technologies, biotechnologies, nanotechnologies and robotics. Relying on results obtained from physics, genetics and neuroscience, as well as on increasingly powerful computing capabilities, profound interventions on living organisms are now possible. Even the human body is subject to interventions capable of modifying not only its functions and capabilities, but also its ways of relating on personal and societal levels, with the result that it is increasingly exposed to market forces. There is a pressing

³ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190106_lettera-accademia-vita.html

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need, then, to understand these epochal changes and new frontiers in order to determine how to place them at the service of the human person, while respecting and promoting the intrinsic dignity of all. This task is extremely demanding, given its complexity and the unpredictability of future developments; consequently, it requires even greater discernment than usual. We can define this discernment as “a sincere work of conscience, in its effort to know the possible good on the basis of which to engage responsibly in the correct exercise of practical reason” (Synod of Bishops on Young People, *Final Document* [27 October 2018], 109). This process of research and evaluation thus entails the workings of the moral conscience and, for the believer, is part of his or her relationship with the Lord Jesus, in the desire to put on the mind of Christ in our actions and choices (cf. *Phil* 2:5).

1. May all those who believe in Christ and observe the moral laws proposed by the Church, achieve full communion with God and all brothers and sisters and, faced with the new bioethical challenges, promote the defence of life through prayer and social action. Let us pray... (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)

ESORTAZIONE APOSTOLICA

EVANGELII GAUDIUM⁴

Francesco

24 November 2013

213. Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenceless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church's effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist and conservative. Yet this defence of unborn life is closely linked to the defence of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defence of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be. Reason alone is sufficient to recognize the inviolable value of each single human life, but if we also look at the issue from the standpoint of faith, “every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offence against the creator of the individual”.^[176]

⁴ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

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For health care workers

APRIL

“We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE XXVIII WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2020⁵

Francis

11 February 2020

4. Dear healthcare professionals, let us always remember that diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic treatments, research, care and rehabilitation are always in the service of the sick person; indeed the noun “person” takes priority over the adjective “sick”. In your work, may you always strive to promote the dignity and life of each person, and reject any compromise in the direction of euthanasia, assisted suicide or suppression of life, even in the case of terminal illness.

When confronted with the limitations and even failures of medical science before increasingly problematic clinical cases and bleak diagnoses, you are called to be open to the transcendent dimension of your profession that reveals its ultimate meaning. Let us remember that life is sacred and belongs to God; hence it is inviolable and no one can claim the right to dispose of it freely (cf. *Donum Vitae*, 5; *Evangelium Vitae*, 29-53). Life must be welcomed, protected, respected and served from its beginning to its end: both human reason and faith in God, the author of life, require this. In some cases, conscientious objection becomes a necessary decision if you are to be consistent with your “yes” to life and to the human person. Your professionalism, sustained by Christian charity, will be the best service you can offer for the safeguarding of the truest human right, the right to life. When you can no longer provide a cure, you will still be able to provide care and healing, through gestures and procedures that give comfort and relief to the sick.

Tragically, in some contexts of war and violent conflict, healthcare professionals and the facilities that receive and assist the sick are attacked. In some areas, too, political authorities attempt to manipulate medical care for their own advantage, thus restricting the medical profession’s legitimate autonomy. Yet attacking those who devote themselves to the service of the suffering members of society does not serve the interests of anyone.

⁵ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/sick/documents/papa-francesco_20200103_giornata-malato.html

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5. On this XXVIII World Day of the Sick, I think of our many brothers and sisters throughout the world who have no access to medical care because they live in poverty. For this reason, I urge healthcare institutions and government leaders throughout the world not to neglect social justice out of a preoccupation for financial concerns. It is my hope that, by joining the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, efforts will be made to cooperate in ensuring that everyone has access to suitable treatments for preserving and restoring their health. I offer heartfelt thanks to all those volunteers who serve the sick, often compensating for structural shortcomings, while reflecting the image of Christ, the Good Samaritan, by their acts of tender love and closeness.

➤ **7 April 2022 - World Health Day**

April 2019

<https://thepopevideo.org/doctors-and-their-collaborators-in-war-torn-areas/>



For faith-filled young people

MAY

“We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary’s life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

CHRISTUS VIVIT⁶

Francis

25 March 2019

Mary, the young woman of Nazareth

43. In the heart of the Church, Mary shines forth. She is the supreme model for a youthful Church that seeks to follow Christ with enthusiasm and docility. While still very young, she accepted the message of the angel, yet she was not afraid to ask questions (cf. *Lk* 1:34). With open heart and soul, she replied, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (*Lk* 1:38).

44. “We are always struck by the strength of the young Mary’s ‘yes’, the strength in those words, ‘be it done’, that she spoke to the angel. This was no merely passive or resigned acceptance, or a faint ‘yes’, as if to say, ‘Well, let’s give it a try and see what happens’. Mary did not know the words, ‘Let’s see what happens’. She was determined; she knew what was at stake and she said ‘yes’ without thinking twice. Hers was the ‘yes’ of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. So I ask each one of you: do you see yourselves as the bearers of a promise? What promise is present in my heart that I can take up? Mary’s mission would undoubtedly be difficult, but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say ‘no’. Things would get complicated, of course, but not in the same way as happens when cowardice paralyzes us because

⁶ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

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things are not clear or sure in advance. Mary did not take out an insurance policy! She took the risk, and for this reason she is strong, she is an 'influencer', the 'influencer' of God. Her 'yes and her desire to serve were stronger than any doubts or difficulties'". [\[18\]](#)

45. Without yielding to evasions or illusions, "she accompanied the suffering of her Son; she supported him by her gaze and protected him with her heart. She shared his suffering, yet was not overwhelmed by it. She was the woman of strength who uttered her 'yes', who supports and accompanies, protects and embraces. She is the great guardian of hope... From her, we learn how to say 'yes' to the stubborn endurance and creativity of those who, undaunted, are ever ready to start over again". [\[19\]](#)

46. Mary was a young woman whose heart overflowed with joy (cf. *Lk 1:47*), whose eyes, reflecting the light of the Holy Spirit, looked at life with faith and treasured all things in her youthful heart (cf. *Lk 2:19.51*). She was energetic, ready to set out immediately once she knew that her cousin needed her. She did not think about her own plans, but went "with haste" to the hill country (*Lk 1:39*).

47. When her young son needed protection, Mary set out with Joseph to a distant land (cf. *Mt 2:13-14*). She also joined the disciples in awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Acts 1:14*). In her presence, a young Church was born, as the apostles went forth to give birth to a new world (cf. *Acts 2:4-11*).

48. Today, Mary is the Mother who watches over us, her children, on our journey through life, often weary and in need, anxious that the light of hope not fail. For that is our desire: that the light of hope never fail. Mary our Mother looks to this pilgrim people: a youthful people whom she loves, and who seek her in the silence of their hearts amid all the noise, the chatter and the distractions of the journey. Under the gaze of our Mother, there is room only for the silence of hope. Thus Mary illumines anew our youth.

January 2019:

<https://thepopevideo.org/young-people-and-the-example-of-mary/>

April 2017:

<https://thepopevideo.org/youth/>



For families

JUNE

“We pray for Christian families around the world; may they embody and experience unconditional love and advance in holiness in their daily lives”.



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ANGELUS⁷

Francis

27 September 2018

In imitation of the Holy Family, we are called to rediscover the educational value of the family unit: it requires being founded on the love that always regenerates relationships, opening up horizons of hope. Within the family one can experience sincere communion when it is a house of prayer, when affections are serious, profound, pure, when forgiveness prevails over discord, when the daily harshness of life is softened by mutual tenderness and serene adherence to God's will. In this way, the family opens itself up to the joy that God gives to all those who know how to give joyfully. At the same time, it finds the spiritual energy to be open to the outside world, to others, to serving brothers and sisters, to cooperation in building an ever new and better world; capable, therefore, of becoming a bearer of positive stimuli; the family evangelizes by the example of life. It is true that there are problems, and at times arguments in every family. “Father, I argued...”. But we are human, we are weak, and we all quarrel within the family at times. I will tell you something: if you quarrel within the family, do not end the day without making peace. “Yes, I quarrelled”, but before the end of the day, make peace. And do you know why? Because a cold war, day after day, is extremely dangerous. It does not help. And then, in the family there are three words, three phrases that must always be held dear: “Excuse me”, “Thank you”, and “Sorry”. “Excuse me”, so as not to be intrusive in the life of others. “Excuse me: may I do something? Do you think I can do this? Excuse me”. Always, not being intrusive. “Excuse me”, the first phrase. “Thank you”: so much help, so much service that we do for one another within the family. Always say thank you. Gratitude is the lifeblood of the noble soul. “Thank you”. And then, the hardest one to say: “I am sorry”. Because we always do some bad things and often someone is offended by this: “I am sorry”, “I am sorry”. Do not forget the three

⁷ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2020/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20201227.html

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phrases: "excuse me", "thank you", and "I am sorry". If there are these three phrases in a family, in a family environment, then the family is fine.

➤ **2022 World Meeting of Families**

August 2019:

<https://thepopevideo.org/families-schools-of-human-development/>

August 2018:

<https://thepopevideo.org/the-treasure-of-families/>



For the elderly

JULY

“We pray for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

"THE RICHNESS OF MANY YEARS OF LIFE"⁸

Francis

31 January 2020

The “richness of many years” is a richness of people, of each individual person who has many years of life, experience and history behind them. It is the precious treasure that takes form in the life journey of each man and woman, whatever their origin, provenance, and economic or social condition. Life is a gift, and when it is long it is a privilege, for each one and for others. Always, it is always so.

When we think of the elderly and talk about them, especially in the pastoral dimension, we must learn to alter the tenses of verbs a little. There is not only the past, as if, for the elderly, there were only a life behind them and a mouldy archive. No. The Lord can and wants to write with them also new pages, pages of holiness, of service, of prayer.... Today I wish to tell you that the elderly *are also the present and the future* of the Church. Yes, they are also the future of a Church that, together with the young, prophesies and dreams! This is why it is so important that those advanced in years and the young speak to each other, it is so important.

The prophecy of the elderly takes place when the light of the Gospel enters fully into their lives; when, like Simeon and Anne, they take Jesus in their arms and announce the *revolution of tenderness*, the Good News of the One who came into the world to bring the light of the Father. That is why I ask you not to spare yourselves in proclaiming the Gospel to grandparents and the elders. Go to them with a smile on your lips and the Gospel

⁸ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2020/january/documents/papa-francesco_20200131_congresso-pastoraleanziani.html

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in your hands. Go out into the streets of your parishes and seek out the elderly who live alone. Old age is not an illness, it is a privilege! Loneliness can be an illness, but with charity, closeness and spiritual comfort we can heal it.

God has a large population of grandparents throughout the world. Nowadays, in secularized societies in many countries, parents do not have, for the most part, the Christian formation and living faith that the grandparents have which they can pass on to their grandchildren. They are the indispensable link in educating children and young people in the faith. We must get used to including them in our pastoral horizons and to considering them, in a non-episodic way, as one of the vital components of our communities. They are not only people whom we are called to safeguard. They can be the protagonists of a pastoral evangelizing ministry, privileged witnesses of God's faithful love.

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN A GATHERING OF SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS⁹

Francis

15 October 2016

The Church regards the elderly with affection, gratitude, and high esteem. They are an essential part of the Christian community and of society: in particular they represent the roots and the memory of a people. You are an important presence, because your experience is a precious treasure, which is essential if we would look to the future with hope and responsibility. Your maturity and wisdom, accumulated over the years, can help younger people in search of their own way, supporting them on the path of growth and openness to the future. The elderly, in fact, show that, even in the most difficult trials, we must never lose confidence in God and in a better future. They are like trees that continue to bear fruit: even under the weight of years, they can give their original contribution for a society rich in values and for the affirmation of the culture of life.

December 2017

<https://thepopevideo.org/for-the-elderly/>

⁹ See full message:

http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2016/10/15/pope_francis_elderly_bear_witness_to_enduring_truths/en-1265369

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For small businesses

AUGUST

“We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

PASTORAL VISIT TO GENOA

ENCOUNTER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WORLD OF WORK¹⁰

Francis

27 May 2017

The businessman is a key figure in any good economy: there is no good economy without a good entrepreneur. There is no good business without good entrepreneurs, without your ability to create, to create jobs, to create products. [...] It is important to recognize the virtues of workers. Their need - workers - is the need to work well so that the job is done well. Sometimes it is thought that a worker works well just because he is paid: this is a serious disrespect towards workers and labour as it denies the dignity of work, which begins precisely in working well for dignity, for honour. The true manager - I will try to make the profile of a good manager - the real manager knows his workers, because he works alongside them, he works with them. Let's not forget that the entrepreneur must be first of all a worker. If he does not have this experience of dignity, he will not be a good manager. He shares the workers' efforts and shares the joys of work, of solving problems together, of creating something together. If and when he has to lay off someone, this is always a painful decision and he would not do it if possible. No good manager likes to lay off his people - no, he who thinks he can solve the problem of his job by firing people, is not a good entrepreneur, he is a trader, who sells his people today and tomorrow sells his dignity. He always suffers, and sometimes from this suffering new ideas emerge to avoid dismissal. This is the good entrepreneur. I remember, almost a year ago, a little less, at Mass at Santa Marta at 7 am, at the exit I was greeting the people who were there, and a man approached. He was crying. He said, "I came to ask for a grace: I am at the limit and I have to make a statement of bankruptcy. That would mean firing sixty workers, and I do not want to, because I feel like I am firing myself". And that man was crying. He was a good manager. He fought and prayed for his people because they were "his": "They are my family". They were attached to one another.

¹⁰ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/may/documents/papa-francesco_20170527_lavoratori-genova.html

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➤ 21 August 2022 – World Entrepreneurs' Day

April 2018

<https://thepopevideo.org/for-those-who-have-responsibility-in-economic-matters/>

October 2017

<https://thepopevideo.org/rights-of-workers-and-the-unemployed/>



For the abolition of the death penalty

SEPTEMBER

“We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

FRATELLI TUTTI¹¹

Francis

3 October 2020

263. There is yet another way to eliminate others, one aimed not at countries but at individuals. It is the death penalty. Saint John Paul II stated clearly and firmly that the death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from that of penal justice.^[246] There can be no stepping back from this position. Today we state clearly that “the death penalty is inadmissible”^[247] and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.^[248]

267. Here I would stress that “it is impossible to imagine that states today have no other means than capital punishment to protect the lives of other people from the unjust aggressor”. Particularly serious in this regard are so-called extrajudicial or extralegal executions, which are “homicides deliberately committed by certain states and by their agents, often passed off as clashes with criminals or presented as the unintended consequences of the reasonable, necessary and proportionate use of force in applying the law”.^[256]

268. “The arguments against the death penalty are numerous and well-known. The Church has rightly called attention to several of these, such as the possibility of judicial error and the use made of such punishment by totalitarian and dictatorial regimes as a means of suppressing political dissidence or persecuting religious and cultural minorities, all victims whom the legislation of those regimes consider ‘delinquents’. All Christians and people of good will are today called to work not only for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, in all its forms, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions, out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their freedom. I would link this to life imprisonment... A life sentence is a secret death penalty”.^[257]

¹¹ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

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269. Let us keep in mind that “not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this”.[\[258\]](#) The firm rejection of the death penalty shows to what extent it is possible to recognize the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a place in this universe. If I do not deny that dignity to the worst of criminals, I will not deny it to anyone. I will give everyone the possibility of sharing this planet with me, despite all our differences.



For a Church open to everyone

OCTOBER

“We pray for the Church;
ever faithful to, and
courageous in preaching the
Gospel, may the Church be a
community of solidarity,
fraternity and welcome,
always living in an
atmosphere of synodality”.



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

SYNODALITY IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION¹²
2 March 2018

4.1 For a synodal renewal of the life and mission of the Church

104. "Every renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in increase of fidelity to her own calling"^[130]. So, in carrying out her mission, the Church is called to constant conversion, which is a "pastoral and missionary conversion", too; this involves renewing mentalities, attitudes, practices and structures, in order to be ever more faithful to her vocation^[131]. An ecclesial mentality shaped by synodal thinking joyfully welcomes and promotes the grace in virtue of which all the baptised are qualified and called to be missionary disciples. The great challenge for pastoral conversion that follows from this for the life of the Church is to intensify the mutual collaboration of all in evangelising witness based on everyone's gifts and roles, without clericalising lay people and without turning the clergy into lay people, and in any case avoiding the temptation of "an excessive clericalism which keeps them [lay people] away from decision-making"^[132].

105. Pastoral conversion for the implementation of synodality means that some paradigms often still present in ecclesiastical culture need to be quashed, because they express an understanding of the Church that has not been renewed by the ecclesiology of communion. These include: the concentration of responsibility for mission in the ministry of Pastors; insufficient appreciation of the consecrated life and charismatic gifts; rarely making use of the specific and qualified contribution of the lay faithful, including women, in their areas of expertise.

¹² See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html

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106. In the perspective of communion and implementing synodality, some basic lines of orientation in pastoral action can be indicated:

- a. the implementation in the local Church and on every level of the circular relationship between the ministry of Pastors, the participation and co-responsibility of lay people, the stimulus coming from the charismatic gifts according to the dynamic circular link between "one", "some" and "all";
- b. the integration of the exercise of collegiality by Pastors and the synodality lived by the whole People of God as an expression of communion between local Churches within the universal Church;
- c. the exercise of the Petrine ministry of unity and leadership of the universal Church by the Bishop of Rome in the communion of all local Churches, in synergy with the collegial ministry of Bishops and the synodal journey of the People of God;
- d. the openness of the Catholic Church towards other Churches and ecclesial communities in the irreversible commitment to journeying together towards complete unity in the reconciled diversity of their respective traditions;
- e. social diakonia and constructive dialogue with men and women of different religious confessions and convictions in order to bring about together a culture of encounter.

➤ **October 2022 - The Synod of Bishops**

September 2017

<https://thepopevideo.org/parishes-at-the-service-of-the-mission/>



For children who suffer

NOVEMBER

“We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ANGELUS¹³

Francis

9 July 2017

From the first moments of their lives, many children are rejected, abandoned, and robbed of their childhood and future. There are those who dare to say, as if to justify themselves, that it was a mistake to bring these children into the world. This is shameful! Let's not unload our faults onto the children, please! Children are never a "mistake". Their hunger is not a mistake, nor is their poverty, their vulnerability, their abandonment — so many children abandoned on the streets — and neither is their ignorance or their helplessness... so many children don't even know what a school is. If anything, these should be reasons to love them all the more, with greater generosity. How can we make such solemn declarations on human rights and the rights of children, if we then punish children for the errors of adults?

Those who have the task of governing, of educating, but I would say all adults, we are responsible for children and for doing what we can to change this situation. I am referring to "the passion" of children. Every child who is marginalized, abandoned, who lives on the street begging with every kind of trick, without schooling, without medical care, is a cry that rises up to God and denounces the system that we adults have set in place. And unfortunately these children are prey to criminals who exploit them for shameful trafficking or commerce, or train them for war and violence. But even in so-called wealthy countries many children live in dramatic situations that scar them deeply because of crises in the family, educational gaps and at times inhuman living conditions. In every case, their childhood is violated in body and soul. But none of these children are forgotten by the Father who is in heaven! Not one of their tears is lost! Neither is our responsibility lost, the social responsibility of people, of each one of us, and of countries.

¹³ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150408_udienza-generale.html

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When it comes to children, no matter what, there should be no utterance of those legal defense-like formulas: “after all, we are not a charity”, or, “in private, everyone is free to do as he or she wishes”, or even, “we’re sorry but we can’t do anything”. These words do not count when it comes to children.

Too often the effects of a life worn down by precarious and underpaid work, unsustainable hours, bad transport rebound on the children.... Children also pay the price for immature unions and irresponsible separations: they are the first victims; they suffer the outcome of a culture of exaggerated individual rights, and then the children become more precocious. They often absorb the violence they are not able to “ward off” and before the very eyes of adults are forced to grow accustomed to degradation.

Also in our age, as in the past, the Church sets her motherhood at the service of children and their families. To parents and children of this world of ours, she bears the blessing of God, motherly tenderness, a firm reproach and strong condemnation. Children are no laughing matter!

Think what a society would be like if it decided, once and for all, to establish this principle: “It’s true, we are not perfect and we make many mistakes. But when it comes to the children who come into the world, no sacrifice on the part of adults is too costly or too great, to ensure that no child believe he or she was a mistake, is worthless or is abandoned to a life of wounds and to the arrogance of men”. How beautiful a society like this would be! I say that for such a society, much could be forgiven, innumerable errors. Truly a great deal.

➤ 20 november 2022 – World Children’s Day

December 2019

<https://thepopevideo.org/the-future-of-the-very-young/>



For volunteer not-for-profit organisations

DECEMBER

“We pray that volunteer non-profit organisations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation”



PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS TO THE FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS
FOR INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE (FOCSIV)¹⁴

Francis

4 December 2014

[...] Your interventions alongside men and women in difficulty are a vivid proclamation of the tenderness of Christ, who walks with the humanity of all times. Follow this path of voluntary and unselfish commitment. There is so much need of the value of gratuitousness: the poor can never become an opportunity for profit! Poverty today has had a makeover — there are new kinds of poverty! — and among the poor different expectations are growing: they aspire to be leaders, they organize themselves, and most of all they practice the solidarity that exists among the suffering, among the least. You have been called to read these signs of the times and to become an instrument which serves to draw attention to the poor. Solidarity with the poor is thinking and acting in terms of community, of the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by the few. It is also fighting the structural causes of poverty: inequality, unemployment and homelessness, the denial of social and labour rights. Solidarity is a way of making history with the poor, avoiding the allegedly altruistic works that reduce the other to indifference.

Many of the countries where you work know the scandal of war. Working for the development of peoples, you are also cooperating to build peace, seeking with tenacious determination to disarm minds, to draw people near, to build bridges between cultures and religions. Faith will help you to do so even in the most difficult countries, where the spiral of violence seems to leave no room for reason. Your activity in refugee camps is a sign of peace and hope. There you encounter desperate people, faces marked by oppression, children who hunger for food, for liberty and for a future. How many people in the world flee from the horrors of war! How many people are

¹⁴ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141204_focsiv.html

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being persecuted because of their faith, forced to abandon their homes, their places of worship, their lands, their loved ones! How many lives are torn apart! How much suffering and how much destruction! In light of all this, a disciple of Christ does not draw back, does not turn his face away, but seeks to take on this painful humanity with closeness and evangelical welcome.

I am thinking of migrants and refugees, who seek to leave behind harsh living conditions and every type of danger. Cooperation is needed from everyone, institutions, NGOs and ecclesial communities, to promote paths of harmonious coexistence among various people and cultures. Migratory movements call for appropriate reception procedures that do not leave migrants adrift at sea or in the hands of unscrupulous traffickers. At the same time, effective collaboration is necessary among states, in order to efficiently regulate and manage such phenomena.

CATECHESIS FOR ALL WORKERS OF MERCY AND VOLUNTEERS¹⁵

Francis

3 September 2016

Brothers and sisters, you represent the large and varied world of voluntary workers. You are among the most precious things the Church has, you who every day, often silently and unassumingly, give shape and visibility to mercy. You are *crafters of mercy*: with your hands, with your eyes, with your hearing, with your closeness, by your touch... craftsmen! You express one of the most noble desires of the human heart, making a suffering person feel loved. In the different contexts of need of so many people, your presence is the hand of Christ held out to all, and reaching all. You are the hand of Christ held out: have you thought about this? The credibility of the Church is also conveyed in a convincing way through your service to abandoned children, to the sick, the poor who lack food or work, to the elderly, the homeless, prisoners, refugees and immigrants, to all struck by natural disasters... Indeed, wherever there is a cry for help, there your active and selfless witness is found. In bearing one another's burdens, you make Christ's law visible (cf. *Gal 6:2; Jn 13:34*). Dear brothers and sisters, you touch the flesh of Christ with your hands: do not forget this. You touch the flesh of Christ with your hands. Be always ready to offer solidarity, to be steadfast in your closeness to others, determined in awakening joy and genuine in giving comfort. The world stands in need of concrete signs of solidarity, especially as it is faced with the temptation to indifference. It requires persons who, by their lives, defy such individualism, which is the tendency to think only of oneself and to ignore the brother or sister in need. Be always happy and full of joy in the service you give, but never presume to think that you are superior to others. Instead, let your work of mercy be a humble and eloquent continuation of Jesus' presence who continues to bend down to our level to take care of the ones who suffer. For love "builds up" (*1 Cor 8:1*), day after day helping our communities to be signs of fraternal communion.

➤ 5 December 2022 – International Volunteer Day

¹⁵ See full message:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/september/documents/papa-francesco_20160903_giubileo-operatori-misericordia.html

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