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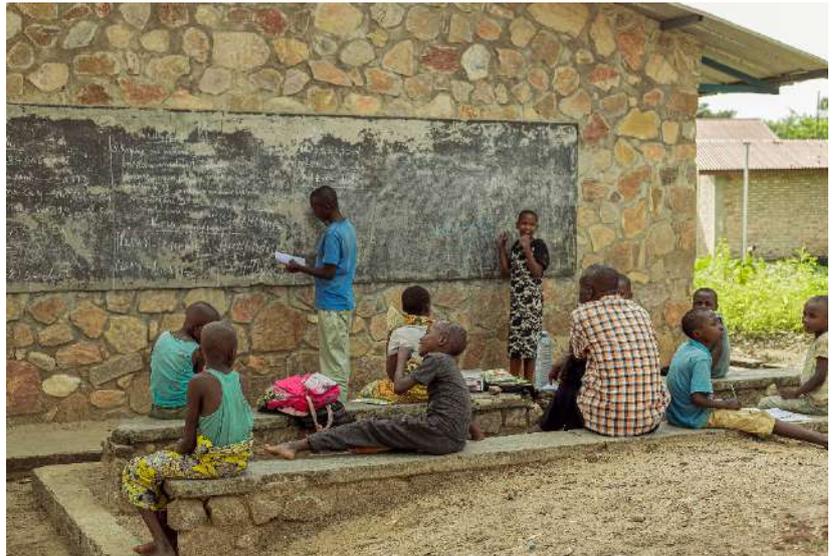
## PRAYER AND SERVICE CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH • 2023 •

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For educators

**JANUARY**

**“We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.”**



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### PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING  
“RELIGIONS AND EDUCATION:  
TOWARDS A GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION”<sup>1</sup>  
Francis  
5 October 2021

If we desire a more fraternal world, we need to educate young people “to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives” (Encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#), 1). The fundamental principle “Know yourself” has always guided education. Yet we should not overlook other essential principles: “Know your brother or sister”, in order to educate in welcoming others (cf. Encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#); [Document on Human Fraternity](#), Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019); “Know creation”, in order to educate in caring for our common home (cf. Encyclical [Laudato Si'](#)) and “Know the Transcendent”, in order to educate in the great mystery of life. We are concerned to ensure an integral formation that can be summed up in knowledge of ourselves, our brothers and sisters, creation and the Transcendent. We cannot fail to speak to young people about the truths that give meaning to life.

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<sup>1</sup> See full message:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/october/documents/20211005-pattoeducativo-globale.html>

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Religions have always had a close relationship with education, accompanying religious activities with educational, scholastic and academic ones. As in the past, so also in our day, with the wisdom and humanity of our religious traditions, we want to be a stimulus for a renewed educational activity that can advance universal fraternity in our world.

If in the past, our differences set us at odds, nowadays we see in them the richness of different ways of coming to God and of educating young people for peaceful coexistence in mutual respect. For this reason, education commits us never to use God's name to justify violence and hatred towards other religious traditions, to condemn all forms of fanaticism and fundamentalism, and to defend the right of each individual to choose and act in accordance with his or her conscience.

If in the past, also in the name of religion, discrimination was practiced against ethnic, cultural, political and other minorities, today we want to be defenders of the identity and dignity of every individual and to teach young people to accept everyone without discrimination. For this reason, education commits us to accept people as they are, not how we want them to be, without judging or condemning anyone.

If in the past, the rights of women, children and the most vulnerable were not always respected, today we are committed firmly to defend those rights and to teach young people to be a voice for the voiceless. For this reason, education impels us to reject and denounce every violation of the physical and moral integrity of each individual. Education must make us realize that men and women are equal in dignity; there is no room for discrimination.

**Dicembre 2019**

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

**September 2018**

<https://thepopevideo.org/young-people-in-africa/>



For parishes

## FEBRUARY

**“We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need”**



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

Instruction

The pastoral conversion

of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church<sup>2</sup>

Congregation for the Clergy

29 June 2020

27. The subject of the missionary and evangelising action of the Church is always the People of God as a whole. The Code of Canon Law emphasises that the Parish is not identified as a building or a series of structures, but rather as a specific community of the faithful, where the Parish Priest is the proper pastor<sup>[30]</sup>. Pope Francis recalled that “the parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration”, and affirmed that it is “a community of communities”<sup>[31]</sup>.

28. The various components that make up the Parish are called to communion and unity. When each part recognises its complementary role in service of the community, on the one hand, we see the fulfilment of the collaborative ministry of the Parish Priest with his Assistant Priests, while on the other hand, we see how the various charisms of deacons, consecrated men and women and the laity, cooperate in building up the singular body of Christ (cf. 1 Co 12:12).

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<sup>2</sup> See full message:

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/0391/00886.html#ing>

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29. The Parish is a community gathered together by the Holy Spirit to announce the Word of God and bring new children of God to birth in the baptismal font. Assembled by the pastor, the Parish celebrates the memorial of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, bearing witness to faith in charity, living in a permanent state of mission, whilst ensuring that no one is excluded from the salvific, life-giving message. Pope Francis expressed it thus: "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelises, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptability, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. [...] We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented"<sup>[32]</sup>.

30. The "spiritual and ecclesial style of Shrines" – which are true "missionary outposts" in their own right – is not extraneous to the Parish, characterised as they are by their spirit of welcome, their life of prayer and silence that renews the spirit, the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their care for the poor. Parish pilgrimages to various Shrines are precious instruments that can serve to strengthen fraternal communion, openness and welcome upon return to the Parish<sup>[33]</sup>.

31. A Shrine, then, is analogous to a Parish in that it encompasses all the characteristics and services that ought to be found in the parish community, as it represents for the faithful the desired goal of their interior searching and a place where they can encounter the merciful face of Christ in a welcoming Church. Frequenting Shrines can help the faithful rediscover their being "anointed by the Holy One" (1 Jn 2:20), that is to say their baptismal consecration. At such places, one learns to celebrate with fervour the mysterious presence of God in the midst his people in the liturgy, in the beauty of the evangelising mission of the baptised, and in the call to exercise charity in daily life<sup>[34]</sup>.

32. A 'sanctuary' open to all, the Parish, called to reach out to everyone, without exception, should remember that the poor and excluded must always have a privileged place in the heart of the Church. As Pope Benedict XVI affirmed: "The Gospel is addressed in a special way to the poor"<sup>[35]</sup>. In addition, as Pope Francis observed "the new evangelisation is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them"<sup>[36]</sup>.

33. Oftentimes, the Parish community is the first place of personal human encounter that the poor have with the face of the Church. Priests, deacons and consecrated men and women are among the first to have compassion for the "wounded flesh"<sup>[37]</sup> of their brothers and sisters, to visit the sick, to support the unemployed and their families, thereby opening the door to those in need. With their gaze fixed upon them, the Parish community evangelises and is evangelised by the poor, discovering anew the call to preach the Word in all settings<sup>[38]</sup>, whilst recalling the "supreme law" of charity, by which we shall all be judged<sup>[39]</sup>.



APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION  
EVANGELII GAUDIUM<sup>3</sup>  
Francesco  
24 November 2013

28. The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”.<sup>[26]</sup> This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.<sup>[27]</sup> In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers.<sup>[28]</sup> It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

September 2017:

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

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<sup>3</sup>See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

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For victims of abuse

## MARCH

**“We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering”**



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

### MEETING

"THE PROTECTION OF MINORS IN THE CHURCH"<sup>4</sup>

Francis

24 February 2019

[...] Our work has made us realize once again that the gravity of the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors is, and historically has been, a widespread phenomenon in all cultures and societies. Only in relatively recent times has it become the subject of systematic research, thanks to changes in public opinion regarding a problem that was previously considered taboo; everyone knew of its presence yet no one spoke of it. I am reminded too of the cruel religious practice, once widespread in certain cultures, of sacrificing human beings – frequently children – in pagan rites. Yet even today, the statistics available on the sexual abuse of minors drawn up by various national and international organizations and agencies (the WHO, UNICEF, INTERPOL, EUROPOL and others) do not represent the real extent of the phenomenon, which is often underestimated, mainly because many cases of the sexual abuse of minors go unreported,<sup>[1]</sup> particularly the great number committed within families.

Rarely, in fact, do victims speak out and seek help.<sup>[2]</sup> Behind this reluctance there can be shame, confusion, fear of reprisal, various forms of guilt, distrust of institutions, forms of cultural and social conditioning, but also lack of information about services and facilities that can help. Anguish tragically leads to bitterness, even suicide, or at times to seek revenge by doing the same thing. The one thing certain is that millions of children in the world are victims of exploitation and of sexual abuse.

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<sup>4</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190224\\_incontro-protezioneminori-chiusura.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco_20190224_incontro-protezioneminori-chiusura.html)

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[...] We are thus facing a universal problem, tragically present almost everywhere and affecting everyone. Yet we need to be clear, that while gravely affecting our societies as a whole,<sup>[10]</sup> this evil is in no way less monstrous when it takes place within the Church.

The brutality of this worldwide phenomenon becomes all the more grave and scandalous in the Church, for it is utterly incompatible with her moral authority and ethical credibility. Consecrated persons, chosen by God to guide souls to salvation, let themselves be dominated by their human frailty or sickness and thus become tools of Satan. In abuse, we see the hand of the evil that does not spare even the innocence of children. No explanations suffice for these abuses involving children. We need to recognize with humility and courage that we stand face to face with the mystery of evil, which strikes most violently against the most vulnerable, for they are an image of Jesus. For this reason, the Church has now become increasingly aware of the need not only to curb the gravest cases of abuse by disciplinary measures and civil and canonical processes, but also to decisively confront the phenomenon both inside and outside the Church. She feels called to combat this evil that strikes at the very heart of her mission, which is to preach the Gospel to the little ones and to protect them from ravenous wolves.

Here again I would state clearly: if in the Church there should emerge even a single case of abuse – which already in itself represents an atrocity – that case will be faced with the utmost seriousness. Brothers and Sisters: in people's justified anger, the Church sees the reflection of the wrath of God, betrayed and insulted by these deceitful consecrated persons. The echo of the silent cry of the little ones who, instead of finding in them fathers and spiritual guides encountered tormentors, will shake hearts dulled by hypocrisy and by power. It is our duty to pay close heed to this silent, choked cry.

So what would be the existential "meaning" of this criminal phenomenon? In the light of its human breadth and depth, it is none other than the present-day manifestation of the spirit of evil. If we fail to take account of this dimension, we will remain far from the truth and lack real solutions.

[...] The Church's aim will thus be to hear, watch over, protect and care for abused, exploited and forgotten children, wherever they are. To achieve that goal, the Church must rise above the ideological disputes and journalistic practices that often exploit, for various interests, the very tragedy experienced by the little ones.

The time has come, then, to work together to eradicate this evil from the body of our humanity by adopting every necessary measure already in force on the international level and ecclesial levels. The time has come to find a correct equilibrium of all values in play and to provide uniform directives for the Church, avoiding the two extremes of a "*justicialism*" provoked by guilt for past errors and media pressure, and a *defensiveness* that fails to confront the causes and effects of these grave crimes.



For a culture of peace and non violence

## APRIL

**“We pray for the spread of peace and non violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens”**



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTIETH WORLD DAY OF PEACE<sup>5</sup>

Francis

8 December 2016

On this occasion, I would like to reflect on *nonviolence* as a style of politics for peace. I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life. When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of nonviolent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms.

### *A broken world*

2. While the last century knew the devastation of two deadly World Wars, the threat of nuclear war and a great number of other conflicts, today, sadly, we find ourselves engaged in a horrifying *world war fought piecemeal*. It is not easy to know if our world is presently more or less violent than in the past, or to know whether modern means of communications and greater mobility have made us more aware of violence, or, on the other hand, increasingly inured to it.

In any case, we know that this “piecemeal” violence, of different kinds and levels, causes great suffering: wars in different countries and continents; terrorism, organized crime and unforeseen acts of violence; the abuses suffered by migrants and victims of human trafficking; and the devastation of the environment. Where does this

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<sup>5</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161208\\_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html)

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lead? Can violence achieve any goal of lasting value? Or does it merely lead to retaliation and a cycle of deadly conflicts that benefit only a few “warlords”?

Violence is not the cure for our broken world. Countering violence with violence leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are diverted to military ends and away from the everyday needs of young people, families experiencing hardship, the elderly, the infirm and the great majority of people in our world. At worst, it can lead to the death, physical and spiritual, of many people, if not of all.

*More powerful than violence*

4. Nonviolence is sometimes taken to mean surrender, lack of involvement and passivity, but this is not the case. When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she clearly stated her own message of active nonviolence: “We in our family don’t need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace – just get together, love one another... And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world”.<sup>[7]</sup> For the force of arms is deceptive. “While weapons traffickers do their work, there are poor peacemakers who give their lives to help one person, then another and another and another”; for such peacemakers, Mother Teresa is “a symbol, an icon of our times”.

- 2 October 2022 - The International Day of Non-Violence

January 2020

<https://thepopevideo.org/promotion-of-world-peace/>

June 2017

<https://thepopevideo.org/eliminate-arms-trade/>



For church movements and groups

**MAY**

“We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelisation each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world”



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING OF MODERATORS OF LAY ASSOCIATIONS,  
ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS AND NEW COMMUNITIES<sup>6</sup>

Francis

16 September 2021

1. I wished to be here, first and foremost, to say thank you! Thank you for your presence as laypersons, men and women, young and elderly, committed to living and bearing witness to the Gospel in the everyday realities of life, in your work, in many different contexts – education, social commitment, and so on, in the street, at railway terminals, there, you were all there – this is the vast field of your apostolate, it is your evangelization. And we must understand that evangelization is a mandate that comes from Baptism, the Baptism that makes us priests together, in the priesthood of Christ; the priestly population, no? And we must not wait for the priest to come, for the priest to evangelize, the missionary... Yes, they do great good, but whoever has been baptized has the task of evangelizing. And you have reawakened this with your movements. And this is very good. Thank you.

During recent months, you have seen with your own eyes and touched with your hands the sufferings and anguish of many men and women, due to the pandemic, especially in the poorest countries, where many of you are present. One of you spoke with me about this. So much poverty and destitution... I think of us here in the Vatican – everything is good, isn't it? – who complain when our meal is not cooked well, when ... there are people who have nothing to eat. I am grateful to you because you have not stopped; you have not stopped bringing your solidarity, your help, your evangelical testimony even during the hardest months, when the level of contagion was very high. Despite the restrictions due to the necessary preventative measures, you did not give up: on the contrary, I know that many of you redoubled your efforts, adapting to the real situations you have,

<sup>6</sup> See full message:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/september/documents/20210916-associazioni-fedeli.html>

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and had before you, with that creativity that comes from love, because those who feel loved by the Lord love without measure. We have seen this “without measure” in so many religious sisters, in many consecrated women, in many priests and in many bishops. I am thinking of a bishop who ended up intubated because he always wanted to stay with his people. He is now slowly recovering. You and all the people of God stood together in this, and you were there. None of you said, “No, I can't go, because my founder thinks differently”. So, no founder: here there was the Gospel that called, and everyone went forth. Thank you very much. You have been witnesses to “that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters”. There are no half measures.

2. As members of associations of the faithful, of international ecclesial movements and other communities, you have a genuinely ecclesial mission. With devotion you endeavour to live out and make fruitful those charisms that the Holy Spirit, through your founders, granted to all the members of your groups, to the benefit of the Church and of the many men and women to whom you dedicate yourselves in the apostolate. I think especially of those who, finding themselves in the existential peripheries of our societies, experience abandonment and solitude in their own flesh, and suffer as a result of their many material needs and of moral and spiritual poverty. It will do us all good to remember every day not only the poverty of others, but also, and above all, our own.

**October 2021:**

<https://thepopevideo.org/missionary-disciples/>

**December 2018:**

<https://thepopevideo.org/in-the-service-of-the-transmission-of-faith/>



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For the abolition of torture

**JUNE**

**“We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families”**



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## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO POLAND  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXXI WORLD YOUTH DAY  
GREETINGS TO THE FAITHFUL  
FROM THE WINDOW OF THE ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE<sup>7</sup>  
Francis  
29 July 2016

[...] Such pain, such cruelty! Is it possible that we men, created in the image and likeness of God, are capable of such things? These things *were* done. I don't want to make you sad, but I must speak the truth. Cruelty did not end at Auschwitz, at Birkenau: today too, people are tortured; many prisoners are tortured at once, to make them speak... It is terrible! Today there are men and women in overcrowded prisons; they live – I'm sorry – like animals. Today there is this cruelty. We say: yes, we saw the cruelty of seventy years ago, how people were put to death by being shot, or hanged, or with gas. But today in many places in the world, where there is war, the same thing is happening.

Jesus came into this reality to carry it on his shoulders. And he asks us to pray. Let us pray for all the Jesuses today in the world: the hungry, the thirsty, the doubtful, the sick, those who are alone, those who feel the weight of many doubts and crimes. They suffer so much... Let us pray for the many children who are sick, who are innocent, who carry a child's cross. And let us pray for the many men and women being tortured today in various countries of the world; for the prisoners all piled together, as if they were animals. What I am saying to you is a little sad, but it is the truth. But it is also true that Jesus carried all these things upon himself. Our sin too.

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<sup>7</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160729\\_polonia-arcivescovado.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco_20160729_polonia-arcivescovado.html)

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All of us here are sinners, all of us bear the weight of our sins. I don't know if anyone believes he is free of sin... If anyone thinks he is not a sinner, let him raise his hand... We are all sinners. But he loves us, he loves us! And so let us – as sinners, but as sons of God, sons of our Father – let us all together offer a prayer for these people who suffer so many terrible things today in the world, so much evil. And when there are tears, the child looks for its mother; we too, sinners, we are children, we look for our Mother, so let us pray all together, each in his own language.

#### ADDRESS TO THE DELEGATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PENAL LAW<sup>8</sup>

Francis

23 October 2014

##### *Regarding torture and other measures, and cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments*

The adjective “cruel”; under these headings that I have mentioned, there is always that root: the human capacity for cruelty. This is a passion, a real vice! One form of torture is the one sometimes applied through confinement in high security prisons. With the pretext of offering greater security to society or special treatment for certain categories of prisoners, its main characteristic is none other than external isolation. As shown by studies carried out by various human rights organizations, the lack of sensory stimuli, the total impossibility of communication and the lack of contact with other human beings induce mental and physical suffering such as paranoia, anxiety, depression, weight loss, and significantly increase the suicidal tendency.

This phenomenon, a characteristic of high security prisons, also occurs in other types of penitentiaries, along with other forms of physical and mental torture, the practice of which has spread. Today torture is not inflicted only as a means of obtaining a specific objective, such as a confession or information — practices which are characteristic of national security doctrine — but is a genuine surplus of pain added to the actual suffering of imprisonment. In this way, torture occurs not only in clandestine detention centres or in modern day concentration camps, but also in prisons, institutes for juveniles, psychiatric hospitals, police stations and other centres and institutions of detention and punishment. The very theory of criminal justice has great responsibility in this sphere, by the fact of having permitted, in certain cases, the legitimization of torture on certain grounds, opening the way to further and more extensive abuses.

Many States are also responsible for having committed or tolerated kidnapping within their territories, including that of citizens of their respective countries, or of having authorized the use of their air space for illegal transportation toward detention centres where torture takes place. These abuses can only be stopped with the firm commitment of the international community to recognize the primacy of the *pro homine* principle, meaning the dignity of the human person above every thing else.

##### ➤ 26 June 2023 - International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

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<sup>8</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20141023\\_associazione-internazionale-diritto-penale.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141023_associazione-internazionale-diritto-penale.html)

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For a Eucharistic life

## JULY

**“We pray that Catholics may place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, transforming human relationships in a very deep way and opening to the encounter with God and all their brothers and sisters”**



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## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ANGELUS<sup>9</sup>

Francis

6 June 2021

Each time we receive the Bread of Life, Jesus comes to give new meaning to our fragilities. He reminds us that in his eyes we are more precious than we think. He tells us he is pleased if we share our fragilities with him. He repeats to us that his mercy is not afraid of our miseries. The mercy of Jesus is not afraid of our miseries. And above all he heals us from those fragilities that we cannot heal on our own, with love. What fragilities? Let's think. That of feeling resentment toward those who have done us harm — we cannot heal from this on our own; that of distancing ourselves from others and closing off within ourselves — we cannot heal from that on our own; that of feeling sorry for ourselves and complaining without finding peace; from this too, we cannot heal on our own. It is He who heals us with his presence, with his bread, with the Eucharist. The Eucharist is an effective medicine for these closures. The Bread of Life, in fact, heals rigidity and transforms it into docility. The Eucharist heals because it unites with Jesus: it makes us assimilate his way of living, his ability to break himself apart and give himself to brothers and sisters, to respond to evil with good. He gives us the courage to go outside of ourselves and bend down with love toward the fragility of others. As God does with us. This is the logic of the Eucharist: we receive Jesus who loves us and heals our fragilities in order to love others and help them in their fragilities; and this lasts our entire life. In the Liturgy of the Hours today, we prayed a hymn: four verses that are the summary of Jesus' entire life. And they tell us this: as Jesus was born, he became our travelling companion

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<sup>9</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2021/documents/papa-francesco\\_angelus\\_20210606.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2021/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20210606.html)

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in life. Then, at the supper he gave himself as food. Then, on the cross, in his death, he became the “price”; he paid for us. And now, as he reigns in Heaven he is our reward; we go to seek the One who awaits us [cf. Hymn at Lauds on *Corpus Christi, Verbum Supernum Prodiens*].



For World Youth Day

**AUGUST**

“We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.”



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE XXXVI WORLD YOUTH DAY<sup>10</sup>

Francis

21 November 2021

*Dear young people,*

Once again I would like to take you by the hand and walk with you on the spiritual pilgrimage that leads to the 2023 World Youth Day in Lisbon.

Whenever a young person falls, in some sense all humanity falls. Yet it is also true that when a young person rises, it is as if the whole world rises as well. Young people, what great potential you have in your hands! What great strength you have in your hearts!

Today too, God is saying to each one of you: “Arise!” I fervently hope that this Message may help us prepare for new times and a new page in the history of humanity. Yet we cannot begin anew without you, dear young people. If our world is to arise, it needs your strength, your enthusiasm, your passion. [...]

*Arise and bear witness!*”

When we embrace the new life bestowed on us in baptism, the Lord gives us an important and life-changing mission: “You are to be my witness!”

<sup>10</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco\\_20210914\\_messaggio-giovani\\_2021.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20210914_messaggio-giovani_2021.html)

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Today Christ speaks to you the same words that he spoke to Paul: Arise! Do not remain downcast or caught up in yourself: a mission awaits you! You too can testify to what Jesus has begun to accomplish in your lives. In Jesus' name, I ask you:

- Arise! Testify that you too were blind and encountered the light. You too have seen God's goodness and beauty in yourself, in others and in the communion of the Church, where all loneliness is overcome.
- Arise! Testify to the love and respect it is possible to instill in human relationships, in the lives of our families, in the dialogue between parents and children, between the young and the elderly.
- Arise! Uphold social justice, truth and integrity, human rights. Protect the persecuted, the poor and the vulnerable, those who have no voice in society, immigrants.
- Arise! Testify to the new way of looking at things that enables you to view creation with eyes brimming with wonder, that makes you see the Earth as our common home, and gives you the courage to promote an integral ecology.
- Arise! Testify that lives of failure can be rebuilt, that persons spiritually dead can rise anew, that those in bondage can once more be free, that hearts overwhelmed by sorrow can rediscover hope.
- Arise! Testify joyfully that Christ is alive! Spread his message of love and salvation among your contemporaries, at school and in the university, at work, in the digital world, everywhere.

The Lord, the Church and the Pope trust you and appoint you to bear witness before all those other young people whom you will encounter on today's "roads to Damascus". Never forget that "anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus" ([\*Evangeli Gaudium\*](#), 120).

*Arise and celebrate WYD in the particular Churches!*

Once again, I invite all of you, young people throughout the world, to take part in this spiritual pilgrimage leading to the celebration of the 2023 World Youth Day in Lisbon. The next event, however, will take place in your particular Churches, in the different dioceses and eparchies of the world, where the 2021 World Youth Day will be celebrated locally, on the Solemnity of Christ the King.

I hope that all of us can experience these steps along the way as true pilgrims, and not merely as "religious tourists"! May we be increasingly open to God's surprises, for he wants to light up our path. May we be more and more open to hearing his voice, also through the voices of our brothers and sisters. In this way, we will help one another to arise together and, at this troubled time in our history, we will become the prophets of a new and hope-filled future! May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for all of us.

➤ 1 - 6 August 2023 – World Youth Day –Lisbon

Gennaio 2022

<https://thepopevideo.org/i-giovani-alla-scuola-di-maria/?lang=it>



For people living on the margins

## SEPTEMBER

“We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance”



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE FIFTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR<sup>11</sup>

Francis

14 November 2021

6. Nonetheless, one question, which is by no means obvious, remains. How can we give a tangible response to the millions of the poor who frequently encounter only indifference, if not resentment? What path of justice must be followed so that social inequalities can be overcome and human dignity, so often trampled upon, can be restored? Individualistic lifestyles are complicit in generating poverty, and often saddle the poor with responsibility for their condition. Yet poverty is not the result of fate; it is the result of selfishness. It is critical, therefore, to generate *development processes* in which the abilities of all are valued, so that complementarity of skills and diversity of roles can lead to a common resource of mutual participation. There are many forms of poverty among the “rich” that might be relieved by the wealth of the “poor”, if only they could meet and get to know each other! None are so poor that they cannot give something of themselves in mutual exchange. The poor cannot be only those who receive; they must be put in a position to give, because they know well how to respond with generosity. How many examples of sharing are before our eyes! The poor often teach us about solidarity and sharing. True, they may be people who lack *some things*, often *many things*, including the bare *necessities*, yet they do not lack *everything*, for they retain *the dignity of God's children* that nothing and no one can take away from them.

7. For this reason, *a different approach to poverty* is required. This is a challenge that governments and world institutions need to take up with a farsighted social model capable of countering the new forms of poverty that are now sweeping the world and will decisively affect coming decades. If the poor are marginalized, as if they were to blame for their condition, then the very concept of democracy is jeopardized and every social policy will

<sup>11</sup> See full message:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/20210613-messaggio-v-giornatamondiale-poveri-2021.html>

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prove bankrupt. With great humility, we should confess that we are often incompetent when it comes to the poor. We talk about them in the abstract; we stop at statistics and we think we can move people's hearts by filming a documentary. Poverty, on the contrary, should motivate us to creative planning, aimed at increasing the freedom needed to live a life of fulfilment according to the abilities of each person. It is an illusion, which we should reject, to think that freedom comes about and grows through the possession of money. Serving the poor effectively moves us into action and makes it possible to find the most suitable ways of raising and promoting this part of humanity that all too often is anonymous and voiceless, but which has imprinted on it the face of the Saviour who asks for our help.

**June 2016**

<https://thepopevideo.org/solidarity-in-cities/>



For the Synod

## OCTOBER

**“We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world”.**



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE 56th WORLD DAY  
OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS<sup>12</sup>

Francis

24 January 2022

*Listening to one another in the Church*

In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another. It is the most precious and life-giving gift we can offer each other. “Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by him who is himself the great listener and whose work they should share. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the word of God” [4]. Thus, the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that the first service we owe to others in communion consists in listening to them. Whoever does not know how to listen to his brother or sister will soon no longer be able to listen to God either.[5]

The most important task in pastoral activity is the “apostolate of the ear” – to listen before speaking, as the Apostle James exhorts: “Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak” (1:19). Freely giving some of our own time to listen to people is the first act of charity.

A synodal process has just been launched. Let us pray that it will be a great opportunity to listen to one another. Communion, in fact, is not the result of strategies and programmes, but is built in mutual listening between brothers and sisters. As in a choir, unity does not require uniformity, monotony, but the plurality and variety of voices, polyphony. At the same time, each voice in the choir sings while listening to the other voices and in

<sup>12</sup> See full message:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/20220124-messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html>

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relation to the harmony of the whole. This harmony is conceived by the composer, but its realization depends on the symphony of each and every voice.

With the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us, we can rediscover a symphonic Church, in which each person is able to sing with his or her own voice, welcoming the voices of others as a gift to manifest the harmony of the whole that the Holy Spirit composes.

➤ **October 2022 - Synod of Bishops**

**August 2021**

<https://thepopevideo.org/august-church-on-the-way/>

**October 2019**

<https://thepopevideo.org/missionary-spring-in-the-church/>



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For the Pope

## NOVEMBER

“We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfils his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.”



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## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

Conversation with 24 Jesuits in Mozambique<sup>13</sup>

Francesco

5 October 2019

It is important that people pray for the Pope and for his intentions. I am tempted and very besieged: only the prayer of his people can free him, as stated in the Acts of the Apostles. When Peter was imprisoned the Church prayed incessantly for him. If the Church prays for the Pope, this is a grace. I truly feel continually the need to beg for prayer. The prayer of the people supports.

HOMILY

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES<sup>14</sup>

Francis

29 June 2020

[...] Today's first reading brings us to the source of this unity. It relates how the newly born Church was experiencing a moment of crisis: Herod was furious, a violent persecution had broken out, and the Apostle James had been killed. And now Peter had been arrested. The community seemed headless, everyone fearing for his life. Yet at that tragic moment no one ran away, no one thought about saving his own skin, no one abandoned the others, but all *joined in prayer*. From prayer they drew strength, from prayer came a unity more powerful than any threat. The text says that, “while Peter was kept in prison, the Church prayed fervently to God for him”

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<sup>13</sup> See full message:

<https://www.tellerreport.com/news/2019-09-26---pope-francis--%22i-am-a-besieged-and-tempted-pontiff--pray-for-me%22-.SyMyj8M9DS.html>

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Source: [rainews](https://www.rainews.com)

<sup>14</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200629\\_omelia-pallio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200629_omelia-pallio.html)

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(Acts 12:5). Unity is the fruit of prayer, for prayer allows the Holy Spirit to intervene, opening our hearts to hope, shortening distances and holding us together at times of difficulty. [...]



For persons with disabilities

## DECEMBER

“We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation”



## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES<sup>15</sup>

Francis

3 December 2020

### 1. The threat of the throwaway culture

In the first place, the “rain”, the “rivers” and the “winds” that threaten the house can be identified with the throwaway culture widespread in our time (cf. [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 53). For that culture, “some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately, persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled” ([Fratelli Tutti](#), 18).

That culture affects especially the most vulnerable, among whom are the persons with disabilities. In the last fifty years, important steps forward have been taken on both the civil and ecclesial levels. Awareness of the dignity of each person has grown, and this has resulted in courageous decisions to promote the inclusion of those experiencing physical and psychological limitations. Yet, on the cultural level, much still stands in the way of this trend. We see it in attitudes of rejection, due also to a narcissistic and utilitarian mentality, that give rise to marginalization that ignores the inevitable fact that *frailty is part of everyone's life*. Indeed, some with even severe disabilities, despite great challenges, have found the way to a beautiful and meaningful life, whereas many “able-bodied” people feel dissatisfied or even desperate. “Vulnerability is intrinsic to the essential nature of humanity” ([Address to the Conference “Catechesis and People with Disabilities”](#), 21 October 2017).

<sup>15</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201203\\_messaggio-disabilita.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201203_messaggio-disabilita.html)

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Consequently, it is important, on this Day, to promote a *culture of life* that constantly affirms the dignity of every person and works especially to defend men and women with disabilities, of all ages and social conditions.

## 2. The "rock" of inclusion

The present pandemic has further highlighted the disparities and inequalities widespread in our time, particularly to the detriment of the most vulnerable. "The virus, while it does not distinguish between people, has found, in its devastating path, great inequalities and discrimination. And it has only made them worse" ([Catechesis at the General Audience of 19 August 2020](#)).

For this reason, *inclusion* should be the first "rock" on which to build our house. Although this term is at times overused, the Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk 10:25-37*) continues to be timely. Along the road of life, we often come across wounded people, and these can include persons with disabilities and particular needs. "The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders" ([Fratelli Tutti](#), 69).

Inclusion should be the "rock" on which to build programmes and initiatives of civil institutions meant to ensure that no one, especially those in greatest difficulty, is left behind. The strength of a chain depends upon the attention paid to its weakest links.

As for ecclesial institutions, I reiterate the need to make available *suitable and accessible means* for handing on the faith. I also hope that these can be made available to those who need them, cost-free to the extent possible, also through the new technologies that have proven so important for everyone in the midst of this pandemic. I also encourage efforts to provide all priests, seminarians, religious, catechists and pastoral workers with *regular training* concerning disabilities and the use of inclusive pastoral tools. Parish communities should be concerned to encourage among the faithful a welcoming attitude towards people with disabilities. Creating a fully accessible parish requires not only the removal of architectural barriers, but above all, helping parishioners to develop attitudes and acts of solidarity and service towards persons with disabilities and their families. Our aim should be to speak no longer about "them", but rather about "us".

### ➤ 3 December 2022 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities