



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **ANGELUS** *Saint Peter's Square*

Sunday, 4 October 2015 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Moments ago in St Peter's Basilica, the [Eucharistic celebration](#), with which we opened the [Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops](#), concluded. The Synod Fathers, coming from every part of the world and meeting around the Successor of Peter, will reflect for three weeks on the vocation and the mission of the family in the Church and in society, for a careful spiritual and pastoral discernment. We will keep our gaze fixed on Jesus so as to identify, on the basis of his teaching of truth and mercy, the most opportune paths for the appropriate commitment of the Church with families and for families, so that the original plan of the Creator for man and woman may be implemented and operate in all its beauty and its strength in today's world.

This Sunday's Liturgy presents again the fundamental text of the Book of Genesis on the complementarity and reciprocity between man and woman (cf. Gen 2:18-24). Therefore — the Bible states — a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and the two become one flesh, that is, one life, one existence (cf. v. 24). In this unity, spouses pass on life to new human beings: they become parents. They participate in the creative power of God himself. But be mindful! God is love, and one participates in his work when one loves with Him and like Him. For this purpose — St Paul states — love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (cf. Rom 5:5). This is also the love which is given to spouses in the Sacrament of Marriage. It is love that nourishes their relationship, through joy and pain, untroubled and difficult moments. It is love that gives rise to the desire to bear children, to await them, welcome them, raise them, teach them. It is the same love which, in today's Gospel, Jesus shows toward children: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:14).

Today let us ask the Lord that all parents and educators of the world, as well as the whole of society, make themselves instruments of welcome and of that love with which Jesus embraces the littlest ones. He looks into their hearts with the tenderness and solicitude of a father and of a mother at the same time. I think of so many children who are hungry, abandoned, exploited, forced into war, rejected. It is heartbreaking to see images of unhappy children, with a bewildered gaze,

who flee from poverty and conflicts, knocking at our doors and on our hearts, begging for help. May the Lord help us to be not a society-fortress, but a society-family, able to welcome, with appropriate rules, but to welcome, to always welcome, with love!

I invite you to support the works of the Synod with prayer, so that the Holy Spirit may render the Synod Fathers fully docile to his inspiration. Let us invoke the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary, uniting us spiritually to those who, at this moment, in the Shrine of Pompeii, recite the "Prayer to Our Lady of the Rosary".

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday in Santander, Spain, Pio Heredia and 17 men and women companions of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance and of St Bernard were beatified. They were killed for their faith during the Spanish civil war and the religious persecution of the 1930s. Let us praise the Lord for this courageous witnesses, and through their intercession, let us implore that the world may be freed from the scourge of war.

I would like to address a prayer to the Lord for the victims of the landslide that devastated an entire village in Guatemala, as well as for those of the flooding that has occurred in the French Riviera. Let us also be close to the peoples hard hit, with tangible solidarity.

I thank all of you who have come in such numbers from Rome, from Italy and from so many parts of the world. I greet the faithful from the Archdiocese of Paderborn, Germany, those from Porto, Portugal, and the group from the Mekhitarist college in Rome.

On the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of Italy, I greet with special affection the Italian pilgrims, in particular the faithful of Reggio Calabria, Bollate, Mozzanica, Castano Primo, Nule and Parabita. I greet the youth from Belvedere di Spinello and the Association for Pedestrian Rights in Rome and Lazio. I wish a happy Sunday to all, and please, don't forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*
