



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 25 August 2024

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

Today the Gospel of the liturgy (*Jn* 6:60-69) relates to us the famous response of Saint Peter, who says to Jesus: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (*Jn* 6:68). A great response! It is a very beautiful expression that shows the friendship and faith that bind him to Christ, along with the other disciples. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”. Beautiful!

Peter speaks these words at a critical moment, because Jesus has just finished a discourse in which he said he was the “bread which came down from heaven” (cf. *Jn* 6:41). This is difficult language for people to understand, and many, even disciples who followed Him, abandoned Him because they did not understand.

The Twelve, however, did not: they stayed because in Him they found “words of eternal life”. They heard Him preach, they saw the miracles He performed, and they continued to share with Him public moments and the intimacy of daily life (cf. *Mk* 3:7-19).

The disciples do not always understand what the Master says and does. At times they struggle to accept the paradoxes of His love (cf. *Mt* 5:38-48), the extreme demands of His mercy (cf. *Mt* 18:21-22), the radical nature of His way of giving Himself to all. It is not easy for them to understand, but they are faithful. Jesus’ choices often go beyond common thought, beyond the

very canons of institutional religion and traditions to the point of creating provocative and embarrassing situations (cf. *Mt* 15:12). Following Him is not easy.

Yet, among the many teachers of that time, Peter and the other apostles found only in Him the answer to the thirst for life, thirst for joy, thirst for love that animates them. It is only thanks to Him that they experienced the fullness of life they seek, beyond the limits of sin and even death. Hence, they do not leave: rather, all but one, despite many falls and times of repentance they will remain with Him until the end (cf. *Jn* 17:12).

And, brothers and sisters, this also concerns us. Even for us it is not easy to follow the Lord, to understand His way of acting, to make His criteria and His example our own. Even for us, it is not easy. However, the closer we are to Him — the more we adhere to His Gospel, receive His grace in the Sacraments, stay in His company in prayer, imitate Him in humility and charity — the more we experience the beauty of having Him as our Friend and realise that He alone has the “words of eternal life”.

And so we ask ourselves: how present is Jesus in my life? How much do I let His words touch and move me? Can I say that the “words of eternal life” are also for me? To you, my brother, my sister, I ask: Are Jesus’ words, for you — also for me — words of eternal life?

May Mary, who received Jesus, the Word of God, in her flesh, help us to listen to Him and never leave Him.

After praying the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters!

I wish to express my solidarity with the thousands of people affected by Mpox (monkeypox), which is now a global health emergency. I pray for all those infected, especially the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, suffering greatly. I express my sympathy to the local Churches in the countries most affected by this disease and I encourage governments and private industries to share available technology and treatments so that no one lacks adequate medical care.

To the beloved people of Nicaragua: I encourage you to renew your hope in Jesus. Remember that the Holy Spirit always guides history towards higher projects. May the Immaculate Virgin protect you in times of trial and help you feel her motherly tenderness. May Our Lady accompany the beloved people of Nicaragua.

I continue to follow with sorrow the fighting in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. And in thinking

about the laws recently adopted in Ukraine, I fear for the freedom of those who pray, because those who truly pray always pray for all. Praying is not committing evil. If someone commits evil against his people, he will be guilty for that, but he cannot have committed evil because he prayed. So let those who want to pray be allowed to pray in what they consider their Church. Please, let no Christian Church be abolished directly or indirectly. Churches are not to be touched!

And let us continue to pray that the wars in Palestine, in Israel, in Myanmar and in every other region come to an end. The people are asking for peace! Let us pray that the Lord will give us all peace.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from many countries. In particular, I greet the new seminarians of the North American College and wish them a good formative journey; and I also wish them to live their priesthood with joy, because true prayer gives us joy. I greet the young people with motor and cognitive disabilities, who are taking part in the “relay march of inclusion” to affirm that barriers can be overcome. I greet my friends, the young people of the Immacolata.

And I wish everyone a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and arrivederci!