



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCES** San Damaso courtyard

Wednesday, 30 September 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Catechesis “Healing the world”: 9. Preparing the future together with Jesus who saves and heals

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In recent weeks we have reflected together, in the light of the Gospel, on how to heal the world that is suffering from a malaise that has been highlighted and accentuated by the pandemic. The malaise was already there: the pandemic highlighted it more, it accentuated it. We have walked the paths of *dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity*, paths that are essential to promote human dignity and the *common good*. And as disciples of Jesus, we have proposed to follow in his steps, *opting for the poor, rethinking the use of material goods and taking care of our common home*. In the midst of the pandemic that afflicts us, we anchored ourselves to the principles of the *social doctrine of the Church*, allowing ourselves to be guided *by faith, by hope and by charity*. Here we found solid help so as to be transformers who dream big, who are not stopped by the meanness that divides and hurts, but who encourage the generation of a new and better world.

I would like this journey not to end with my catecheses, but rather that we may be able to continue to walk together, to “keep our eyes fixed on Jesus” (cf. *Heb* 12:2), as we heard at the beginning; our eyes fixed on Jesus, who saves and heals the world. As the Gospel shows us, Jesus healed the sick of every type (cf. *Mt* 9:35), he gave sight to the blind, the word to the mute, hearing to the deaf. And when he cured diseases and physical infirmity, he also healed the spirit by forgiving sins, because Jesus always forgives, as well as “social suffering” by including the marginalized (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1421). Jesus, who renews and reconciles every creature (cf. *2 Cor* 5:17; *Col* 1:19-20), gives us the gifts necessary to love and heal as he knew how to do (cf. *Lk* 10:1-9; *Jn* 15: 9-17), to take care of all without distinction on the basis of race, language or nation.

In order for this to really happen, we need to contemplate and appreciate the beauty of every human being and every creature. We were conceived in the heart of God (cf. *Eph* 1:3-5). “Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is

necessary” (Benedict XVI, *Homily for the beginning of the Petrine ministry*, 24 April 2005; Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 65). Furthermore, every creature has something to say to us about God the creator (cf. Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 69, 239). Acknowledging this truth and giving thanks for the intimate bonds in our universal communion with all people and all creatures activates “generous care, full of tenderness” (*ibid.*, 220). And it also helps us to recognize Christ present in our poor and suffering brothers and sisters, to encounter them and to listen to their cry and the cry of the earth that echoes it (cf. *ibid.*, 49).

Inwardly mobilized by these cries that demand of us another course (cf. *ibid.*, 53), that demand change, we will be able to contribute to the restoration of relations with our gifts and capacities (cf. *ibid.*, 19). We will be able to regenerate society and not return to so-called “normality”, which is an ailing normality, indeed which was ailing before the pandemic: the pandemic highlighted it! “Now we return to normality”: no, this will not do, because this normality was sick with injustice, inequality and environmental degradation. The normality to which we are called is that of the Kingdom of God, where “the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them” (*Mt* 11:5). And nobody plays dumb by looking the other way. This is what we have to do in order to change. In the normality of the Kingdom of God, there is bread for all and more to spare, social organization is based on contributing, sharing and distributing, not on possessing, excluding and accumulating (cf. *Mt* 14:13-21).

The gesture that enables progress in a society, a family, a neighbourhood, or a city, everyone, is to give oneself, to give, which is not giving alms, but is a giving of self that comes from the heart. A gesture that distances us from selfishness and the anxiety of possessing. But the Christian way of doing this is not a mechanical way: it is a human way. We will never be able to emerge from the crisis that was highlighted by the pandemic, mechanically, with new tools — which are very important, they allow us to move forward, and we must not be afraid of them — but knowing that even the most sophisticated means, capable of doing many things, are incapable of one thing: tenderness. And tenderness is the very sign of Jesus’ presence. Approaching others in order to walk [together], to heal, to help, to sacrifice oneself for others.

Thus, that normality of the Kingdom of God is important: that bread may reach everyone, that social organization be based on contributing, sharing and distributing, with tenderness; not on possessing, excluding and accumulating. Because at the end of life, we will not take anything with us into the other life!

A small *virus* continues to cause deep wounds and to expose our physical, social and spiritual vulnerabilities. It has laid bare the great inequality that reigns in the world: inequality of opportunity, of goods, of access to health care, of technology, education: millions of children cannot go to school, and so the list goes on. These injustices are neither natural nor inevitable. They are the work of man, they come from a model of growth detached from the deepest values.

The waste of leftover food: with that waste one can feed everyone. And this has made many people lose hope and has increased uncertainty and anguish. This is why, to emerge from the pandemic, we must find the cure not only for the coronavirus — which is important! — but also for the great human and socio-economic viruses. They must not be concealed by whitewashing them so that they cannot be seen. And certainly we cannot expect the economic model that underlies unfair and unsustainable development to solve our problems. It has not and will not do so, because it cannot do so, even though some false prophets continue to promise the “trickle-down effect” that never comes (“Trickle-down effect” in English, “*derrame*” in Spanish (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 54). You yourselves have heard the theory of the glass: the important thing is that the glass become full and then overflow to the poor and to others, and they receive wealth. But there is a phenomenon: the glass begins to fill up and when it is almost full it grows, it grows and grows, and the trickling down never happens. We must be careful.

We need to set to work urgently to generate good policies, to design systems of social organization that reward participation, care and generosity, rather than indifference, exploitation and particular interests. We must go ahead with tenderness. A fair and equitable society is a healthier society. A participatory society — where the “last” are taken into account just like the “first” — strengthens communion. A society where diversity is respected is much more resistant to any kind of virus.

Let us place this healing journey under the protection of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Health. May she, who carried Jesus in her womb, help us to be trustful. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can work together for the Kingdom of God that Christ inaugurated in this world by coming among us. It is a Kingdom of light in the midst of darkness, of justice in the midst of so many outrages, of joy in the midst of so much pain, of healing and of salvation in the midst of sickness and death, of tenderness in the midst of hatred. May God grant us to “viralize” *love* and to “globalize” *hope* in the light of *faith*.

Special greetings

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful, especially the new seminarians who have arrived in Rome to begin their years of formation and the deacons of the Pontifical North American College. May the Lord sustain their efforts to be faithful servants of the Gospel. Upon all of you and your families I invoke the joy and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

Lastly my thoughts turn as usual to *the elderly*, to *young people*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*. May each one, in whatever situation they may find themselves, know how to be generous in their commitment to a better future, in the acceptance of trials and suffering, and in mutual love for the edification of a united, true family.

Summary of the Holy Father's words:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in the series of catecheses that concludes today, we have reflected on the effects of the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine. Our world needs to be healed not only of the present virus, but also of the "social ills" of inequality, injustice and exclusion that afflict so many of our brothers and sisters in the human family. In the light of Christ's teaching, we have seen the importance of solidarity, subsidiarity and respect for human dignity for the shaping of a society in accord with the values of God's Kingdom, a society that gives priority to its poorest and most vulnerable members, and to the responsible stewardship of the goods of creation. Just as Jesus brought physical and spiritual healing to the sick, so we too are called to bring the Gospel's healing power to the task of creating a more just, inclusive and participatory society at every level. In this way, by God's grace, we will emerge from the present crisis with renewed hope for the building of a world ever more consistent with our human dignity and lofty vocation.