



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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General Audience

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Greetings in various languages

Appeal of the Holy Father

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.30 a.m. in St. Peter's Square, where the Holy Father Francis met with groups of pilgrims and faithful from Italy and all over the world.

In his address in Italian the Pope focused on the theme "*May the memory of vocation rekindle hope*".

After summarising his catechesis in several languages, the Holy Father addressed special greetings to the groups of faithful present.

The General Audience concluded with the recital of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today I would like to return to an important theme: the relationship between hope and memory, with particular reference to the memory of vocation. And I take as an icon the call of Jesus' first disciples. This experience remains so imprinted on their memory that some even remember the time: "It was about four in the afternoon"

(Jn, 1: 39). The evangelist John describes the episode as a clear recollection of his youth, still intact in his memory as an elderly man, since John wrote these things when he was already elderly.

The encounter took place near the river Jordan, where John the Baptist was baptising; and those young Galileans had chosen the Baptist as their spiritual guide. One day Jesus came, and He asked to be baptised in the river. The following day he passed by again, and so the baptiser – that is, John the Baptist – said to two of his disciples: “Behold the lamb of God!” (v. 36).

And for those two it is the “spark”. They leave their first Master and begin to follow Jesus. On the way, He turns to them and poses the decisive question: “What are you seeking?” (v. 38). Jesus appears in the Gospels as an expert on the human heart. In that moment he had encountered two young men searching, healthily restless. Indeed, what youth is a satisfied youth, without a question about meaning? The young who seek nothing are not young, they are pensioners, they have aged before their time. It is sad to see young people who are pensioners... And Jesus, throughout all the Gospel, in all the encounters that happen to Him along the way, appears to be an incendiary of hearts. From here there comes that question of His that attempts to bring out the desire for life and happiness and every young person carries within: “What are you seeking?” I too would like to ask the young people here in the square today, and those who listen via the media: “You, who are young, what are you seeking? What are you looking for in your heart?”

The vocation of John and Andrew starts in this way: it is the beginning of a friendship with Jesus that is so strong as to impose a commonality of life and passions with Him. The two disciples begin to stay with Jesus and immediately they become missionaries, because when the encounter is over they do not return home calmly; so much so that their respective brothers, Simon and James, are soon followers too. They went to them and said, “We have found the Messiah, we have found a great prophet”: they bear the news. They are missionaries of that encounter. It is an encounter so touching, so happy that the disciples will remember for ever that day that enlightened and gave direction to their youth.

How can one discover one’s own vocation in this world? It can be discovered in many ways, but this page of the Gospel tells us that the first indicator is the joy of the encounter with Jesus. Marriage, consecrated life, priesthood: every true vocation begins with an encounter with Jesus that gives us a new joy and hope; and it leads us, even through hardships and difficulties, to an ever fuller encounter with Him – it grows greater, that encounter –and to the fullness of joy.

The Lord does not want men and women who walk behind Him unwillingly, without having the breeze of joy in their heart. You, who are here in the square, I ask you – each one of you answer to himself – do you have in your heart the breeze of joy? Each one of you, ask yourselves, “Do I have within me, in my heart, the breeze of joy?”. Jesus wants people who have experienced that staying with Him gives an immense happiness, that can be renewed every day in life. A disciple of the Kingdom of God who is not joyful does not evangelise this world, he is sad. We become preachers of Jesus not by honing the instruments of rhetoric – you can talk, talk and talk, but if there is nothing else ... how can we become preachers of Christ? Keeping in our eyes the glimmer of true happiness. We see many Christians, even among us, who with their eyes transmit to you the joy of faith, with their eyes!

For this reason the Christian – like the Virgin Mary – keeps the flame of her love, her love for Jesus. Certainly, there are trials in life, there are moments when we need to keep going despite the cold and the counter winds, despite much bitterness. But Christians know the road that carries them to that sacred fire that has inflamed them once and for all.

Please, I advise you: let us not listen to those who are disappointed and unhappy; let us not listen to those who cynically advise us not to cultivate hope in life; let us not trust in those who dampen every enthusiasm at the outset, saying that no enterprise is worth sacrificing all of life for; let us not listen to the “aged” of heart who suffocate youthful euphoria. Let us go to the aged who have eyes that shine with hope! Let us instead cultivate healthy utopias: God wants us to be capable of dreaming like Him and with Him, while we walk clearly attentive to reality. Dreaming of a different world. And if a dream is stifled, let us start to dream again, drawing with hope

from the memory of the origins, to those burning embers that, perhaps after not so good a life, are hidden under the ashes of the first encounter with Jesus.

Here, therefore, is a fundamental dynamic of Christian life: remembering Jesus. Paul said to his disciple, "Remember Jesus Christ" (2 *Tim* 2: 8); this is the advice of the great Saint Paul, "Remember Jesus Christ". Remember Jesus, the fire of love with which one day we conceived of our life as a plan for good, and to revive our hope with this flame.

Greetings in various languages

French

I welcome French-speaking pilgrims, in particular the seminarians and young people of Meaux, the faithful of Guinée, gathered here with their respective bishops. May your pilgrimage to Rome help you to draw with hope from the memory of the Church and the recollection of your encounter with Jesus. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, particularly those from Malta, Guinea, the Philippines and Canada. Upon all of you and your families, I invoke the grace of the Lord Jesus, that you may be a sign of Christian hope in the midst of your communities. May God bless you all!

German

I heartily greet German-speaking pilgrims, in particular the Benedictine monks of Admont Abbey, couples from the diocese of Graz-Seckau who are celebrating twenty-five years of marriage, and the scholars from the academic programme for foreigners of the German Episcopal Conference. Let us carry the flame of Christ's love to humanity, which is so in need of true happiness and peace. May the Holy Spirit guide you on your path.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, in particular the groups from Spain and Latin America. I encourage you to remember that first encounter with Jesus in your lives, so that you can rekindle that fire of love, which invites you to follow Him with joy, and which is the flame of hope. Thank you very much.

Portuguese

Dear Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, welcome! In greeting you all, especially the members of the Chapecoense Football Association and students of both St. Paul's College and the Pius Brazilian College in Rome, I hope that you will grow in the wisdom that comes from God so that, made experts in matters of God, you will be able to communicate to others His gentleness and His love. May the abundance of His blessings descend upon you and your families.

Arabic

I cordially welcome Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Middle East. Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus looks at you too and invites you to come to Him. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit that suggests bold choices, and do not delay when your conscience asks you to risk following the Master. May the Lord bless you all.

Polish

I address a warm greeting to Polish pilgrims. Dear brothers and sisters, may the remembrance of beautiful past events reawaken joy and optimism in us. Even more, may the memory of the moments of personal encounter with Christ and in the light of His love strengthen our hope, especially in the time of trials and sufferings. Let us pray to the Lord, that His Spirit always inspire in us this memory that leads to hope. God bless you and your families.

Italian

I address a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims. In particular, I greet the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary who are attending their general Chapter, seminarians from Milan, confirmands from Verona and those from Lucca accompanied by their archbishop. I greet the AGESCI scouts of the Marches with Cardinal Edoardo Menichelli, refugees hosted by the diocese of Montepulciano-Chiusi-Pienza, who have received Baptism in recent days and are gathered here with Bishop Stefano Manetti, the Association of Victims of the "Forteto" with Cardinal Giuseppe Betori, and employees of Vodafone Italy. Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that for all of you your visit to the tombs of the Apostles will strengthen your adherence to Christ and make you His witnesses in families, in ecclesial communities and in civil society.

Finally, I greet the young, the sick and newly-weds. Dear young people, returning after the holidays to your usual activities, know how to find the time every day for your dialogue with God and spread around you His light and His peace. You, dear people who are sick, find comfort in the Lord Jesus, Who continues His work of redemption in the life of every man. And you, dear newly-weds, learn to pray together, in the intimacy of domestic life, so that your love is ever truer, more fruitful and lasting.

Appeal of the Holy Father

The day after tomorrow, 1 September, will be World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. On this occasion, I and my dear brother Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, have prepared together a Message. In this we invite all to assume a respectful and responsible attitude towards creation. Let us also appeal to those who occupy influential roles to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer the most as a result of ecological imbalances.
