



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Wednesday 11.10.2017

General Audience

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Greetings in various languages

Appeals 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 of "Vigilant expectation".

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.

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Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today I would like to focus on that dimension of hope that is *vigilant expectation*. The theme of vigilance is recurrent in the New Testament. Jesus preaches to His disciples, "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they

may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks" (*Lk* 12: 35-36). In this time that follows the resurrection of Jesus, in which serene and distressing moments alternate continually, Christians never give up. The Gospel recommends being like servants who never go to sleep until their master has returned. This world demands our responsibility, and we assume all of it, and with love. Jesus wants our existence to be laborious, for us never to let down our guard, to welcome with gratitude and wonder every new day given to us by God. Every morning is a clean page on which the Christian begins to write with good works. We are already saved by Jesus' redemption, but now we await the full manifestation of his lordship: when finally God will be all in all (cf. *1 Cor* 15: 28). Nothing is more certain, in the faith of Christians, than this "appointment", this appointment with the Lord, when He will come. And when this day arrives, we Christians will want to be like those servants who have spent the night dressed for action and with their lamps burning: we need to be ready for salvation when it arrives, ready for the encounter. Have you thought about how this encounter with Jesus will be, when He comes? But, it will be an embrace, an enormous joy, a great joy! We must live in expectation of this encounter!

The Christian is not made for boredom, but rather for *patience*. He or she knows that even in the monotony of certain days that are always the same, the mystery of grace is hidden. There are people who with the perseverance of their love become like wells that irrigate the desert. Nothing happens in vain, and no situation in which a Christian finds himself immersed is entirely refractory to love. No night is so long that it makes us forget the joy of the dawn. And the darker the night is, the closer we are to the dawn. If we remain united to Jesus, the cold of difficult moments does not paralyse us; and if even the whole world were to preach against hope, if it said that the future will bring only dark clouds, the Christian knows that in that same future there is the return of Christ. When this will happen, no-one knows, but the thought that at the end of our history there is the merciful Jesus is enough to have confidence and not to curse life. Everything will be saved. Everything. We will suffer, there will be moments that cause anger and indignation, but the gentle and potent memory of Christ will eliminate the temptation to think that this life is a mistake.

After knowing Christ, we cannot do other than scrutinise history with trust and hope. Jesus is like a house, and we are inside, and from the windows of this house we look upon the world. Therefore, let us not be wrapped up in ourselves, let us not regret with melancholy a past that we assume to be golden, but let us always look ahead, to a future that is not only the work of our own hands, but first of all a constant concern of God's providence. Everything that is opaque will one day become light.

And let us think that God does not contradict Himself. Never. God never disappoints. His will with regard to us is not nebulous, but rather a well-defined project of salvation. "God the Saviour ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*1 Tm* 2: 4). Therefore, let us not abandon ourselves to the flow of events with pessimism, as if history were a runaway train. Resignation is not a Christian virtue. Just as it is not for Christians to shrug their shoulders or hang their head in the face of a destiny that appears ineluctable.

Those who give hope to the world are never submissive. Jesus tells us to wait for Him without standing idly: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes" (*Lk* 12: 37). There is no builder of peace who in the final analysis has not compromised his personal peace, taking on the problems of others. The submissive person is not a builder of peace, but lazy, one who wants to be comfortable. Whereas the Christian is a builder of peace when he risks, when he has the courage to risk to bring good, the good that Jesus gave to us, that He gave to us like a treasure.

Every day of our life, let us repeat that invocation that the first disciples, in their Aramaic language, expressed with the words *Marana tha*, and which we find in the last verse of the Bible: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (*Rev* 22: 20).

Greetings in various languages

French

I am pleased to greet pilgrims from France, Switzerland, Canada and the Central African Republic. May the

gentle and potent memory of Christ help us remain vigilant in hope and attentive to His word. God bless you!

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Denmark, Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Canada and the United States of America. In particular I greet those who will be celebrating World Sight Day tomorrow, and I assure all who are blind and visually impaired of my closeness and prayers. Upon you and your families, I invoke the grace of the Lord Jesus, that you may be steadfast in hope and trust in God's providence in your lives. May God bless you all!

German

I address a cordial greeting to German-speaking pilgrims, especially the many young people and participants in the week of information on the Pontifical Swiss Guard. Jesus continues to knock on the door of our heart. Let us welcome Him readily, placing ourselves at the service of others, especially the poor, the sick and refugees. May the Holy Spirit guide you on your path.

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, especially the community of the Pontifical Mexican College of Rome who, accompanied by Cardinals José Francisco Robles Ortega and Alberto Suárez India, as well as by some Mexican bishops, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. I encourage all of you, following the example of our Mother the Virgin Mary, to live with vigilant hope, and to be for those who surround them bearers of the light and caress of the God of Mercy. God bless you.

Portuguese

I address my greeting to all pilgrims from Brazil and other Portuguese-speaking countries, especially the various groups of Brazilian priests, religious and faithful resident in Rome, who are present at this audience to share the joy of the jubilee of 300 years of Nossa Senhora Aparecida, whose feast day we celebrate tomorrow. May the story of the fishermen who found in the Paraíba do Sul river the body and then the head of the statue of Our Lady, subsequently joined together, remind us that in this difficult moment for Brazil, the Virgin Mary is a sign that drives us towards unity based on solidarity and justice. May God bless you.

Arabic

I cordially greet Arabic-speaking pilgrims, in particular those from Lebanon, the Holy Land and the Middle East. Our hope is based on the certainty of Christ's return and on being ready to receive Him. Therefore, let us not abandon ourselves to the flow of events with pessimism, as if history were a runaway train. Resignation is not a Christian virtue. May the Lord bless you and protect you always from the evil one!

Polish

I give a cordial welcome to Polish pilgrims, in particular the organisers of the exhibition "*In nomine Domini*", held at the Urbanian University, dedicated to Cardinal Adam Kozłowiecki. May the memory of this great missionary, archbishop of Lusaka, who spent his life in humble service to the people of Zambia, make us aware of the spiritual and material needs of African nations. Let us pray for missionaries all over the world. God bless you.

Italian

Dear Italian-speaking pilgrims, welcome. I am pleased to welcome the prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, and members of the Dicastery gathered in Rome for the plenary

session, on the first centenary of its foundation. I entrust your work to the intercession of Saint John XXIII, whose liturgical memorial we observe today, so that the Congregation for the Oriental Churches may continue with generous devotion its service to the Catholic east.

I greet the Verbite missionaries, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Daughters and Sons of Saint Ann, the community of the Saint John XXIII minor seminary of Montefiascone and the many faithful from Italian parishes and associations. May the visit to the Tombs of the Apostles promote in all of you a sense of belonging to the ecclesial family and inspire an ever more generous service, full of hope.

I address a special greeting to the young, the sick and newly-weds. The month of October is the missionary month, in which we are invited to pray to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Missions: dear young people, be missionaries of Christ in your environments and with the same mercy and tenderness; dear people who are sick, offer your suffering for the conversion of those who are far away and indifferent; and you, dear newly-weds, be missionaries in your family, announcing with your example the Gospel of salvation.

Appeals of the Holy Father

Next Friday, 13 October, the centenary of the last Marian apparitions in Fatima will come to an end. With our gaze turned towards the Mother of the Lord and the Queen of the Missions, I invite all, especially in this month of October, to pray the Holy Rosary for the intention of peace in the world. May prayer move the most riotous hearts, so as to “banish violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to become nonviolent communities that care for our common home. Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace” (*Message of the 50th World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2017).

On the same day, 13 October, we observe the international Day for the reduction of natural disasters. I renew my heartfelt appeal for the safeguarding of creation through increasingly careful protection and care for the environment. I therefore encourage institutions and those who hold public and social responsibility increasingly to promote a culture that has the aim of reducing exposure to risks and to natural disasters. May concrete actions, aimed at the study and defence of the common home, progressively reduce the risks for the most vulnerable populations.
