



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 190828a

Wednesday 28.08.2019

General Audience

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.20 a.m. in Saint 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 "*As Peter passed by...*" (cf. *Acts* 5: 15). Peter, principal witness to the Risen One" (Bible passage: from the *Acts of the Apostles*, 5: 12, 15-16).

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 recitation of the *Pater Noster* and the Apostolic Blessing.

Catechesis of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

The ecclesial community described in the book of the Acts of the Apostles lives on the great wealth that the Lord makes available to it – the Lord is generous! – and experiences numerical growth and great ferment, despite external attacks. To show to us this vitality, Luke in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles indicates also the meaningful places, for example Solomon's porch (cf. *Acts* 5: 12), a meeting point for believers. The porch (*stoà*) is an open tunnel that functions as a form of shelter, but also as a place of encounter and witness. Indeed, Luke emphasizes the signs and prodigies that accompany the word of the Apostles and on the special cure of the sick to which they devote themselves.

In chapter 5 of the Acts, the nascent Church shows herself to be a "field hospital" that receives the weakest people, that is, the sick. Their suffering attracts the Apostles, who possess neither silver nor gold (cf. *Acts* 3: 6) – so says Peter to the lame man – but are strong in Jesus' name. In their eyes, as in the eyes of the Christians of

all times, the sick are the privileged recipients of the joyful proclamation of the Kingdom, they are brothers in whom Christ is present in a particular way, to allow Himself to be sought and found by all of us (cf. *Mt* 25: 36, 40). The sick are the privileged for the Church, for the priestly heart, for all the faithful. They are not to be rejected: on the contrary they are to be healed, to be cared for: they are the object of Christian concern.

Among the Apostles there emerges Peter, who is pre-eminent in the apostolic group by virtue of his primacy (cf. *Mt*, 16: 18) and the mission received by the Risen One (cf. *Jn* 21: 15-17). It is he who initiates the preaching of the *kerygma* on the day of Pentecost (cf. *Acts* 2: 14-41), and who will perform a directive function at the council of Jerusalem (cf. *Acts* 15 and *Gal* 2: 1-10).

Peter approaches the beds and passes among the sick, just as Jesus had done, taking on Himself all the infirmities and diseases (cf. *Mt* 8: 17; *Is* 53: 4). And Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, passes, but allows Another to manifest Himself: the living and working Christ! The witness, indeed, is he who makes Christ manifest, with words or through bodily presence, which allows him to relate and to be a prolongation of the Word made flesh in history.

Peter is he who carries out the work of the Master (see *Jn* 14. 12): looking at him with faith, we see Christ Himself. Full of the Spirit of his Lord, Peter passes and, without doing anything, his shadow becomes a “caress”, healing, a communication of health, the effusion of the tenderness of the Risen One who stoops to the sick and restores life, salvation and dignity to them. In such a way, God manifests His closeness and makes the wounds of His children into “the theological place of His tenderness” (*Morning Meditation*, Santa Marta, 14.12.2017). In the wounds of the sick, in the ailments that are obstacles to going ahead in life, there is always the presence of Jesus, the wound of Jesus. There is Jesus Who calls each one of us to care for them, to support them, to heal them.

The healing action of Peter arouses the hatred and envy of the Sadducees, who imprison the Apostles and, shocked by their mysterious liberation, forbid them from teaching. These people saw the miracles that the Apostles performed, not by magic, but in the name of Jesus; but they did not want to accept this and put them in prison and beat them. They were then miraculously freed, but the heart of the Sadducees was so hardened that they did not want to believe what they saw. Peter then responds, offering a key to Christian life: “Obey God rather than human beings” (*Acts* 5: 29), because they – the Sadducees – say “You must not continue with these things, you must not heal” . “I obey God before man”: it is the great Christian answer. This means listening to God without reserve, without delays, without calculations; following Him so as to become capable of alliance with Him and with those we meet on our path.

Let us too ask the Holy Spirit for the strength not to be afraid of those who command us to be silent, who slander us and even threaten our life. Let us ask Him to strengthen us inwardly, to be sure of the loving and consoling presence of the Lord by our side.

Greetings in various languages

The Holy Father greeted the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s audience, “especially those from England and the United States of America. Upon you and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of the Lord. May God bless you!”.

The Pope greeted French-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Rennes, Poissy, Retiers and l’Isle en Dodon. He also mentioned, among the Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, the young cadets, instructors and entire team of the “Brasil” training ship, and the faithful of Toledo-Paraná and Ribamar-Lourinhã. In his greetings to Polish faithful, he mentioned that 1 September will be the eightieth anniversary of the beginning of the second world

war, and invited all to pray that there not be a repetition of the tragic events caused by hatred, “which bring only destruction, suffering and death”.

He greeted and blessed Croatian pilgrims, especially the pupils and teachers of the high schools of the diocese of Požega, accompanied by their bishop, Msgr. Antun Škvorčević, as well as the seminarians, pupils and teachers of the archdiocesan Classical Lyceum of Split.

In his greetings in Italian, the Holy Father made special mention of the Sisters of Saint Anne, the Handmaids of the Blessed Mary Immaculate and participants in the summer meeting for seminarians organized by Opus Dei. He greeted young people from the diocese of Verona, and from Chiavari, with Bishop Alberto Tanasino, and those of Lucca, with Bishop Paolo Giulietti. He greeted the faithful of the parishes of Ficulle and Dragonara in Potenza, and the Hematopathic/Oncological Children’s Association.

He noted that today is the liturgical memory of Saint Augustine, bishop and Doctor of the Church, and urged all present to be inspired by his sanctity and his doctrine, so as to rediscover the inner way that leads to God and to our neighbour in need.
