



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

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

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First World Children's Day (WCD 2024) – Holy Mass in Saint Peter's Square

At 10.30 this morning, Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Father Francis presided over Holy Mass on the parvis of the Vatican Basilica on the occasion of the first "World Children's Day" (WCD 2024).

At the end of the Eucharistic Celebration, after the testimony from the actor Roberto Benigni, the Pope announced that the second World Children's Day will be held in the month of September 2026. Then, after several tours in the popemobile among the approximately fifty thousand children, faithful and pilgrims present in Saint Peter's Square, the Pope returned to Santa Marta.

The following is the impromptu homily delivered by the Pope after the proclamation of the Gospel and the words of greeting and thanks he addressed to the children present at the end of the Eucharistic celebration:

Homily of the Holy Father

Dear boys and girls, we are here to pray, to pray together, and to pray to God. Is that okay? Do you agree with this? We pray to God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How many "gods" are there? One in three persons: the Father who created all of us and who loves us very much. When we pray to God the Father, what is the name of the prayer that we all pray together? [Respond: Our Father] We always ask God, in the Our Father, to accompany us in life and to help us grow.

What is the name of the Son? [Respond: Jesus] I can't hear well! [Respond again: Jesus]. Yes, Jesus. We pray to Jesus to support us, to be close to us. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive Jesus. Jesus also forgives us all sins. Is it true that Jesus forgives everything? [Respond: Yes] I didn't hear, what happens... Is it true? Yes. But does he always forgive everything? [Respond: Yes] Always, always, always? [Respond: Yes] If there is a man or a woman, a sinner with many sins, does Jesus forgive him or her? [Respond: Yes] Does he forgive even the ugliest of sinners? [Respond: Yes] Yes! Never forget this: Jesus forgives everything and always, but we must have the humility to ask for forgiveness. "Forgive me, Lord, I have done wrong. I am weak. Life has many difficulties but you forgive everything. I would like to change my life and you will help me". I didn't hear well, is it true that Jesus forgives everything? [Respond: Yes] Very good, don't forget this.

Now, the problem is: who is the Holy Spirit? It is not easy, because the Holy Spirit is God, and he is within us. We receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and in the Sacraments. The Holy Spirit is the one who accompanies us in life. We know this, so let's say it together, "The Holy Spirit accompanies us in life". All together, "The Holy Spirit accompanies us in life". He is the one who tells us in our hearts the good things we need to do. Once again: "The Holy Spirit accompanies us in life". He is the one within who rebukes us when we do something wrong. "The Holy Spirit ..." You already forgot, I can't hear you... One more time! The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us strength and comforts us in difficulties. Together, "The Holy Spirit accompanies us through life".

Dear brothers and sisters, boys and girls, we are all happy because we believe. Faith makes us happy. And we believe in God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All together, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit". The Father who created us, Jesus who saved us, and the Holy Spirit who does what?

Thank you very much to all of you, but know that, we Christians, also have a mother, what is the name of our mother? What is the name of our Mother in Heaven? [Respond: Mary] Do you know how to pray to Our Lady? [Respond: Yes] Are you sure? Let's do it now. [Recitation of the Hail Mary] Good boys and girls, you are all very good. The Father created us, the Son saved us, and what does the Holy Spirit do? Good! God bless you, pray for us, so that we can keep going, all of us, pray for parents, pray for grandparents, and pray for sick children. There are many sick children behind me. Always pray and especially pray for peace, for there to be no wars. Now we continue the Mass, but so we don't forget, what did the Holy Spirit do? Good!

Greeting of the Holy Father at the end of Holy Mass

Dear boys and girls, the Mass is over, but today we talked about God; God the Father who created the world, God the Son who redeemed us and God the Holy Spirit. But what does the Holy Spirit do? I don't remember [Respond: He accompanies us in life] I didn't hear well. [Respond: He accompanies us in life] He accompanies us in life. Now let us all pray together to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen". Now we are leaving, greet your parents, your friends, but most importantly you saw when they brought the bread and wine, that there were children, and that there was even a grandfather: so greet grandparents! All right? A round of applause to grandparents as well. Thank you very much! I would like to thank those who organized this, Father Enzo Fortunato who did so much, Commander Cagnoli who also did a lot, and everyone else who helped them. Dear boys and girls, goodbye!
