



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  
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N. 170503c

Wednesday 03.05.2017

## General Audience

### Catechesis of the Holy Father

### Greetings in various languages

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 his recent apostolic trip to Egypt.

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 speak to you about the Apostolic trip that, with God's help, I made in Egypt in recent days. I visited the country following a fourfold invitation: from the president of the Republic, from His Holiness the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch, from the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and from the Coptic Catholic Patriarch. I thank each one of them for the welcome they gave me, which was truly warm. And I thank the entire Egyptian population for their participation and for the affection with which they lived this visit from Peter's Successor.

The president and the civil authorities made extraordinary efforts to ensure that this event was able to take place in the best way, so that it could be a sign of peace, for Egypt and for all the region, which unfortunately suffers as a result of conflicts and terrorism. Indeed, the motto for the trip was “Pope of peace in an Egypt of peace”.

My visit to Al-Azhar University, the most ancient Islamic university and the highest academic institution of Sunni Islam, had a dual aim: that of dialogue between Christians and Muslims and, at the same time, that of promoting peace in the world. At Al-Azhar I met with the Grand Imam, a meeting which then extended into the International Conference for Peace. In this context I offered a reflection that highlighted the history of Egypt as a land of civilization and a land of covenants. For all humanity Egypt is a synonym for ancient civilization, treasures of art and knowledge; and this reminds us that peace is constructed through education, the formation of knowledge, a humanism that includes as an integral part the religious dimension, the relationship with God, as the Grand Imam recalled in his discourse. Peace is constructed also starting from the covenant between God and man, the foundation of the alliance between all men, based on the Decalogue written on the tablets of stone of Sinai, but far more deeply in the heart of every man of every time and place, a law that is summarized in the two commandments of love for God and neighbour.

This same foundation is at the basis of the construction of the social and civil order, in which all citizens, of every origin, culture and religion, are called to collaborate. Such a vision of healthy secularity emerged in the exchange of speeches with the president of the Republic of Egypt, in the presence of the authorities of the country and the diplomatic corps. The great historic and religious heritage of Egypt and its role in the Middle Eastern region confer to it a special task in the path towards stable and lasting peace, that rests not only on the right to use force, but also on the power of law.

Christians, in Egypt as in every nation on earth, are called to be a leaven of fraternity. And this is possible if in themselves they experience communion in Christ. We were able to give a strong sign of communion, thanks be to God, together with my dear brother Pope Tawadros II, the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church. We were able to reaffirm our commitment, also by signing a Common Declaration, to walk together and to look for ways not to repeat the Baptism administered in the respective Churches. Together we prayed for the martyrs of the recent attacks that tragically targeted that venerable Church, and their blood made fruitful that ecumenical encounter, in which the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew, also participated.

The second day of the trip was dedicated to the Catholic faithful. The Holy Mass celebrated in the Stadium, made available by the Egyptian authorities, was a celebration of faith and fraternity, in which we felt the living presence of the Risen Lord. Commenting on the Gospel, I exhorted the small Catholic community in Egypt to relive the experience of the disciples of Emmaus: to find always in Christ, Word and Bread of life, the joy of faith, the ardour of hope and the strength to bear witness in love that “we have encountered the Lord!”

And the final moment I spent together with the priests, men and women religious and seminarians, in the major seminary. It was a Liturgy of the Word, in which the promises of consecrated life were renewed. In this community of men and women who have chosen to give their life to Christ for the Kingdom of God, I saw the beauty of the Church in Egypt, and I prayed for all the Christians in the Middle East so that, guided by their pastors and accompanied by consecrated persons, they may be salt and light in those lands, in the midst of those people.

I thank once again those who made this trip possible and those who in different ways gave their contribution, especially the many people who offered their prayers and their sufferings. May the Holy Family of Nazareth, which emigrated to the banks of the Nile to flee from Herod’s violence, always bless and protect the Egyptian people and guide them on the way of prosperity, fraternity and peace.

### Greetings in various languages

#### French

I am pleased to welcome French-speaking pilgrims, especially members of Jerusalem's monastic fraternities, parishes and young people from France, and university students from Nice. In this Easter season, I invite you to construct a world of justice and peace where everyone is fraternally welcomed. God bless you!

### **English**

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, particularly the groups from Ireland, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Singapore, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Canada and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

### **German**

I address a warm greeting to all German-speaking pilgrims. Thankful for the beautiful experiences during my trip, I invite the faithful to be leaven of fraternity, and I entrust them to the protection of the Holy Family. God bless you and your families.

### **Spanish**

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, in particular the groups from Spain and Latin America. May the Holy Family of Nazareth, who emigrated to the land of the Nile to flee Herod's violence, bless and protect the people of Egypt, and grant to all of you peace and goodness in your lives. Many thanks.

### **Portuguese**

Dear Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, welcome! I greet you all with great affection and joy, especially the groups from Brazil, the members of the Brazilian Federation of Academies of Medicine, and the faithful from Ribeirão Preto, Londrina and Caratinga. May God's blessing descend upon you and your families.

### **Arabic**

I address a cordial greeting to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Egypt and the Middle East. I thank all those who made this trip possible, and I thank Egypt, "ùm el dùgna", for having invited me and for the generous and warm welcome. May the Lord bless you all and protect you from the evil one.

### **Polish**

I cordially greet the Polish faithful. Today is the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Poland and your national feast day, let us applaud the Queen of Poland, everyone! Listen with love and attention to the advice of your Queen, whom you address with the words: "You are the great pride of our nation". In your daily decisions, follow the path of agreement and mutual benevolence. Make your most important decisions seeking truth, common good and peace. Be open and sensitive to the needs of your brothers. I heartily bless your homeland, those of you present here, and your co-nationals in Poland and throughout the world. Long live Poland!

### **Croatian**

I heartily greet Croatian pilgrims, in particular the priests, teachers, seminarians and students of the diocesan lyceums of the diocese of Požega, accompanied by their bishop, Msgr. Antun Škvorčević, who have gathered at the tomb of the apostle Peter to confirm their faith on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of their founding. Dear friends, with Paschal joy thank God for all the gifts He grants you and, in Christian hope, go ahead courageously, responding every day to Jesus' call to follow Him as His disciples. In this journey, may you be accompanied by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and St. John Paul II, who erected your diocese. I assure

you of my spiritual closeness and impart to you and your families an apostolic blessing. Praised be Jesus and Mary!

### **Italian**

I address a warm welcome to Italian-speaking faithful.

I am glad to welcome the students of the Pontifical Missionary College of St. Paul in Rome and the participants in the course organized by the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences "Auxilium".

I greet the civic network of mayors of the province of Varese; the faithful of Albanella; the members of the Turin Arsenal of Peace and the 24 July Association.

On the feast day of Sts. Philip and James, I hope that for all of you the remembrance of the apostles, joyful proclaimers of the Risen Christ, enhance your faith and encourage witness of the Gospel.

Finally, I offer my greetings to the young, the sick and newly-weds. At the beginning of the month of May we invoke the heavenly intercession of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Dear young people, learn to pray to her with the simple and effective prayer of the Rosary; dear sick people, may Our Lady be your support in the trials of sickness; dear newly-weds, imitate Her love for God and for her brothers.

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