



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Pastoral visit to the Roman parish of “San Gelasio I Papa”, Ponte Mammolo”, Rome

Homily of the Holy Father

Words of the Pope during the various meetings in the Parish

This afternoon, Second Sunday of Lent, the Holy Father Francis paid a pastoral visit to the Roman Parish of *San Gelasio I Papa*, entrusted to the priests of the Church-World Mission family, in the district of Ponte Mammolo.

On his arrival, at 15.30, the Pope was welcomed by Archbishop Angelo de Donatis, vicar general of the diocese of Rome; Msgr. Guerino di Tora, auxiliary bishop for the Northern Sector; the parish priest Don Giuseppe Raciti; and the assistant parish priest, Alfio Carbonaro.

In the sports field, Pope Francis met the children and young people attending catechesis, the young people of the oratory and families; subsequently, in the theatre, he greeted the sick and the elderly of the parish; then, in different halls, he met the poor and the workers from the Caritas centre that assists them, and the volunteers of the Medicine and Food Bank. The Holy Father then met with two young guests in the parish, from the Republic of Gambia, respectively 18 and 25 years; followed by a meeting with the family of the little Giulia Rinaldo, one of the victims of the earthquake of 24 August 2016 in Central Italy, and the members of the *Immensamente Giulia* Association founded by them, and a visit to the *Acli* Centre, where the *Acli System* of Rome has launched some innovative projects in the social and sports field; finally, the Pope confessed some penitents.

At 17.30, the Holy Father presided at Mass in the parish church. Other parish priests of the XI Prefecture, parish priests and some priests who were friends of the community concelebrated with Pope Francis. After the second reading of the liturgy, by a blind parishioner, and the proclamation of the Gospel, the Holy Father gave an off-the-cuff homily.

The Pope then returned to the Vatican.

The following are the text of the Pope's homily and his extemporaneous remarks during the various meetings in the parish:

Homily of the Holy Father

Jesus shows Himself to the Apostles as He is in Heaven: glorious, luminous, triumphant, victorious. And this is done to prepare them to bear the Passion, the scandal of the cross, because they could not understand that Jesus would die like a criminal, they could not understand it. They thought that Jesus was a liberator, but like earthly liberators, those who win in battle, those who are always triumphant. And the path of Jesus is different: Jesus triumphs through humiliation, the humiliation of the cross. But since this would have been a scandal for them, Jesus makes them see what comes next, what is after the cross, what awaits us, all of us. This glory and this Heaven. And this is very beautiful! It is very beautiful because Jesus – and this feels good – always prepares us for the test. In one way or another, but this is the message: He always prepares us. It gives us the strength to go on in moments of hardship and to conquer them with His strength. Jesus does not leave us alone in the trials of life: He always prepares us, helps us, as He prepared them [the disciples], with the vision of His glory. And so they remembered this [moment] to bear the weight of humiliation. This is the first thing that the Church teaches us: Jesus always prepares us for trials, and he is in the trials with us, He does not leave us alone. Never.

The second thing we can take from the words of God: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him!" This is the message that the Father gives to the Apostles. Jesus' message is to prepare them by showing them His glory; the message of the Father is: "Listen to Him". There is no moment in life that can not be lived fully by listening to Jesus. In beautiful moments, stop and listen to Jesus; in bad times, stop and listen to Jesus. This is the way. He will tell us what we have to do. Always.

And let us go forward this Lent with these two things: in hardships, remember the glory of Jesus, that is, what awaits us; that Jesus is always present, with that glory to give us strength. And during all of life, listen to Jesus, what Jesus tells us: in the Gospel, in the liturgy, He always speaks to us; or in the heart.

In everyday life, perhaps we will have problems, or we will have to solve many things. Let's ask ourselves this question: what does Jesus say to me today? And we try to listen to the voice of Jesus, the inspiration from within. And so we follow the advice of the Father: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him!" It will be Our Lady to give you the second council, at Cana in Galilee, when there is the miracle of water [transformed] into wine. What does Our Lady say? "Do what He tells you". Listening to Jesus and doing what He says: this is the sure path. Go forward with the memory of the glory of Jesus, with this advice: listen to Jesus and do what He tells us.

Words of the Pope during the various meetings in the Parish

Meeting with the children and young people of the catechesis, young people of the oratory, and families

Child:

Pope Francis, these are gifts for you. They are letters, a hat with the words: "We waited for you with joy. The children of the parish of *San Gelasio I, Papa*".

Pope Francis:

Come! ... He says they were waiting for me with joy. It's not true! You awaited me with rain! [laughter]

Amelia:

Hello, Pope Francis. I am Amelia and I am part of the third year catechesis group, which this year takes First Communion. Every Sunday we animate the 10.00 Mass with the children who always participate in it, reading the prayer of the faithful, making the offertory and sometimes even singing in the choir. We were waiting for you with joy and we are very happy that you are here. The people you see in this field are the catechists, the children of the catechesis, the families, the animators and the boys of the choir. We follow the catechesis to learn to know Jesus better and to learn from His example.

Pope Francis:

Thank you thank you! You were good.

Luca:

Hello, Pope Francis. My name is Luca, I am part of the second year of catechesis for the Communion. In this park where we are there is the oratory: here we have lots of fun doing tournaments and a lot of games organized by the Church. Then we participate in the Masses, summer camps, carnival parties of which the last was the most fun of all, in which we sang, danced and dressed up in all the various clothes, which were beautiful.

Pope Francis:

Oh, how nice!

Luca:

So we are becoming a great family and we love each other very much.

Pope Francis:

Thank you, thank you, good!

Giorgia:

Hello, Pope Francis. I am Giorgia. As the children told you, we are very happy to have you here. I am part of the help for the catechists. In our little way we do our service to help the Church because – as you said – we young people are the springtime; and we really want to be so, even in our small way, helping with the animation of the Mass for the little ones and then the catechism, the parties ... a bit of everything. We would like to leave our mark, like other people have done with us. And here I leave the word to him.

Pope Francis:

Thank you!

Matteo:

Hello, Pope Francis. I am Matteo, a boy from the Rebibbia quarter. I love playing football and I play in many fields, but when I play in this field, I feel at home. In this oratory, I feel cared for: they asked me to become an animator for the oratory to make the younger boys play. I am happy with this proposal and I will make efforts to do it. We know that you like football a lot too, and I would like to ask you to sign my football.

Pope Francis:

Yes! Bring it to me...

But I have a question for you: what time did you arrive here? How long have you been waiting here? [They answer: two hours, since two o'clock]. Since two? And it's four now! But you are all wet! Thank you! Thank you for your patience. You are good! An applause for you all. Thank you.

And listen to this: life is a little like this afternoon, because at times there is the sun, but at times the clouds come, the rain comes, and the bad weather comes. Know that in life there are good times and bad times. What must a Christian do? Go ahead with courage, in the bad weather and good weather. There will be storms in life... Onwards! Jesus guides us. There will be bright days ... Onwards! Jesus guides us. So, what must a Christian do? Go... [They answer: "Onwards!"] I can't hear you well... [they shout: "Onwards!"]. In what kinds of weather? First the bad [they answer: "Bad"] and then in ... [they respond: "Good"]. All together, let's say this: go ahead in bad times and in good times. You, by yourselves: ["Go ahead in bad times and in good times"]. Thank you. And who accompanies us? [They answer: "Jesus"]. Who? [They answer: "Jesus"]. But Jesus is there only in good times... [They answer: "No"]. Is Jesus there in bad times too? [They answer: "Yes"]. Are you sure? [They answer: "Yes!"]. And what must we do, in bad times, in those that make us suffer, what must we take in our hand? The hand of... [They answer: "Jesus"], because Jesus takes us by the hand and leads us onwards. Each one of you, think – but don't say anything, don't say anything – "Do I let Jesus lead me by the hand?". Each one of you, answer in your heart. "Do I let Jesus lead me by the hand?". "Ah, at times no, Father, because I do things that are not good, and I get bored...". But Jesus is always with us! And if I make a mistake in my life, does Jesus go away? [They answer: "No"]. I don't understand... [They shout: "No!"]. Does He stay? [They answer: "Yes"]. And is He still happy? [They answer: "Yes... no"]. If I make a mistake, is He still happy? [They answer: "No"]. No! He is sad, but He doesn't go away. He always accompanies us. Remember this: in the worst moments, even in the moments in which we do the worst things, Jesus stays there because He loves us very much. Do you understand? [They answer: "Yes!"]. Who is next to you in the good things? [They answer: "Jesus!"]. And in the bad things? [They answer: "Jesus!"]. And when does He go away? [[They answer: "Never!"]. Does He get bored? [They answer: "No!"]. We are the ones who get bored, eh? Thank you. May the Lord bless you. Thank you. And pray for me! Thank you.

Meeting with the elderly and the sick

Pope Francis:

I would like to thank you for what you do for the world and for what you do for the Church. Perhaps some of you might think: "But what do I do for the world? I do not go to the United Nations, I do not go to meetings ... I am here, at home ... What do I do for the Church? It is the Church who does something for me ...". Perhaps you think this way. No. This witness, each person with faith, with wishing well to people, giving good wishes to others, it is like conserving the flame. You are the embers, the embers of the world under the ashes: beneath the difficulties, the wars, there are these embers, embers of faith, embers of hope, embers of hidden joy. Please, conserve the embers, those you have in your heart, with your witness. There may be the problems that exist, the problems that are to come, but that awareness of having a mission, in the world and in the Church: carry forward that hidden flame, the flame of a life. Because your life has not been useless: it has been a fire, fire, it has given warmth, it has done many things. But the fire at the end is extinguished, and the embers remain. Do not forget this: *you are the embers of the world, the embers of the Church to keep the flame alive.*

And talk with the young, please: listen to the young. They need this! Do not rebuke the young, no, no. Let them speak, ask many things that come to mind, because it is not easy to understand the young. But talk with them. They are in need of your experience, they need that hidden flame that is in your embers. Do you understand? Do not forget: I am the ember of Jesus, ember of history, ember of the world, ember of the Church. You are the embers, under the ashes. Thank you very much, and pray for me, as I am in need!

Now I will give you my blessing: May the Lord Jesus bless you heartily, may the Father bless you, and may the Spirit come to your heart and keep these embers alive.

[Blessing]

And do not forget three things: you are embers; second, speak with the young; and pray for the Pope. The three things. Thank you, see you later.

[As he leaves...]

What were the three things? First ... [They answer: "The ember"]. Second ... [They answer: "Speak with the young"]. The third? [They answer: "Pray for the Pope... If the Pope prays for us!"] But, praying ... for or against the Pope? [Laughter] ... [They answer: "For!"] What you say is true: the Pope will pray for you!
