



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

1st Sunday of Lent, 9 March 2025

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Text prepared by the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last Wednesday, with the rite of the Ashes, we began Lent, the forty-day-long penitential itinerary that calls us to the conversion of the heart and leads us to the joy of Easter. Let us commit ourselves to making it a time of purification and spiritual renewal, a path of growth in faith, hope and charity.

This morning, in Saint Peter's Square, holy Mass was celebrated for the world of volunteering, which is experiencing its own Jubilee. In our societies, too enslaved to market logic, where everything risks being subject to the criterion of interest and the quest for profit, volunteering is prophecy and a sign of hope, because it bears witness to the primacy of gratuitousness, solidarity and service to those most in need. I express my gratitude to those who are engaged in this field: thank you for offering your time and abilities; thank you for the closeness and tenderness with which you care for others, reawakening hope in them!

Brothers and sisters, during my prolonged hospitalization here, I too experience the thoughtfulness of service and the tenderness of care, in particular from the doctors and healthcare workers, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart. And while I am here, I think of the many people who in various ways are close to the sick, and who are for them a sign of the Lord's presence. We need this, the "miracle of tenderness" which accompanies those who are in adversity, bringing a little

light into the night of pain.

I would like to thank all those who are showing their closeness to me in prayer: heartfelt thanks to you all! I pray for you too. And I join spiritually with those who in the coming days will participate in the spiritual Exercises of the Roman Curia.

Together let us continue to invoke the gift of peace, in particular in tormented Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In particular, I have learned with concern of the resumption of violence in some areas of Syria: I hope that they cease definitively, with full respect for all ethnic and religious components of society, especially civilians.

I entrust you all to the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary. Happy Sunday, and *arrivederci!*