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. 161022a

Saturday 22.10.2016

Jubilee audience: mercy and dialogue

In his catechesis in this morning's Jubilee audience, held in St. Peter's Square and attended by around 100,000 faithful, the Holy Father reflected on the relationship between mercy and dialogue, based on the reading from the Gospel of John that narrates Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. "What strikes us about this encounter", he said, "is the very close dialogue between the woman and Jesus. Today this allows us to underline a very important aspect of mercy, which is indeed dialogue".

"Dialogue allows people to know each other and to understand each other's needs", he continued. "First, it is a sign of great respect, because it inspires in people an attitude of listening and places them in the condition of recognising the best aspects of their interlocutor. Secondly, dialogue is an expression of charity, because while it does not ignore differences, it can help in seeking and sharing the common good. Furthermore, dialogue invites us to place ourselves before the other, seeing him as a gift from God, who challenges us and asks to be recognised".

"Very often we do not encounter our brothers, even while living alongside them, especially when we make our position prevail over that of the other. We do not enter into dialogue when we do not listen enough, or tend to interrupt the other to show we are right. How often, when listening to someone, we say 'But it is not like that!', and we do not let the person finish explaining what they mean. This obstructs dialogue: this is aggression. True dialogue, instead, requires moments of silence, in which we perceive the extraordinary gift of the presence of God in our brother".

He went on to explain that dialogue helps people to humanise their relationships and overcome misunderstandings. "There is a great need for dialogue in our families. How much more easily problems would be solved if we learned to listen to each other!", he exclaimed. "It is thus in the relationship between husband and wife, and between parents and children. How much help comes also from dialogue between teachers and pupils, or between managers and workers, to discover the most important demands of the job".

The Church too is engaged in dialogue with the men and women of every time, "to understand the needs that are at the heart of every person and to contribute to the realisation of the common good. Let us think of the great gift of creation and the responsibility we all have to protect our common home; dialogue on such a central theme

is an inescapable necessity. Let us think of the dialogue between religions, to discover the profound truth or their mission in the midst of humanity, and to contribute to building peace and a network of respect and fraternity”.

He concluded by emphasising that all forms of dialogue are “an expression of the great need for the love of God, Who reaches out to everyone and places in each person a seed of His goodness, so that he or she might assist in His creative work. Dialogue breaks down the walls of divisions and misunderstandings; it creates bridges of communion and does not allow one to isolate oneself, closed up in one’s own little world. Do not forget: dialogue means listening to what the other person says to us, and saying with gentleness what we think. If it is like this in the family, in the neighbourhood, the workplace, it would be better. But if I do not let the other say what he or she has at heart, and I begin to shout – today we shout so much! – this relationship between us will not end well; the relationship between husband and wife or between parents and children will not end well. Listen, explain gently, do not bark at the other person, do not shout, but have an open heart”.

“Jesus understood well what was in the heart of the Samaritan woman; despite this He did not prevent her from expressing herself – he let her speak until she had finished – and entered a little at a time into the mystery of her life. This teaching applies to us too. Through dialogue, we can allow the signs of God’s mercy to grow and make them a tool of acceptance and respect”.

After summaries of his catechesis in various languages, the Pope greeted the different groups of faithful present in the square. The Jubilee audience concluded with the Lord’s Prayer and an apostolic blessing.