



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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The Pope remembers the people of Aleppo and condemns recent terrorist attacks

“Every day I am close, above all in prayer, to the people of Aleppo”, said the Pope after praying the Angelus. “We should not forget that Aleppo is a city where people live: families, children, elderly, sick people ... Lamentably, we have grown accustomed to war, to destruction, but we should not forget that Syria is a country full of history, of culture, of faith. We cannot accept that all of this be negated by war, which is an accumulation of abuse and falsehood. I appeal to all to make efforts towards a choice in favour of civilization: no to destruction, yes to peace, yes to the people of Aleppo and of Syria”.

“We also pray for the victims of brutal terrorist attacks that in the last few hours have struck various countries. The places are different but unfortunately the violence that sows death and destruction is one and the same, as is the response: faith in God and unity in human and civil values. I would like to express my special closeness to my dear brother Pope Tawadros II [Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church] and his community; while praying for the dead and the wounded.

Francis went on to mention the beatification today in Vientiane, Laos, of Mario Borzaga, a priest of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Paul Thoj Xyooj, a lay catechist, and fourteen companions, killed in hatred of the faith. “Their heroic fidelity to Christ can be an encouragement and an example for missionaries, and especially for catechists, who in missionary lands carry out a valuable and irreplaceable apostolic work, for which the whole Church is thankful. Let us think of our catechists who work hard, and do such a good job. Being a catechist is a great thing: it means bearing the message of the Lord so that it grows in us”. He invited the faithful in St. Peter’s Square to applaud catechists.

Finally, he greeted the pilgrims from different countries, emphasising that his first greeting was reserved for the children and young people of Rome, present in the Square for the traditional blessing of their figurines of the Baby Jesus, organized by parish oratories and Catholic schools. “Dear children, when you pray before the Nativity scene with your parents, ask the Baby Jesus to help all of us to love God and our neighbour. And remember, pray for me too, as I pray for you. Thank you”.

He also greeted the professors of the Catholic University of Sydney, the choir of Mosteiro de Grijó in Portugal, and Italian faithful from Barbianello and Campobasso. He concluded by asking the children in the square to sing

a song for him, and wishing everyone a good Sunday and a good lunch.
