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# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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## **General Audience**

**Catechesis of the Holy Father**

**Greetings in various languages**

This morning's General Audience took place at 10.00 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 the theme "Hopes of the world and hope of the Cross" (cf. *John* 12:24-25).

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!

Last Sunday we recalled the entry of Jesus in Jerusalem, amid the joyous cheers of the disciples and of the crowd. Those people placed many hopes in Jesus; many expected miracles and great signs of Him, manifestations of power and even freedom from enemy occupiers. Who among them would have imagined that shortly after Jesus would have been humiliated, condemned and killed on the cross? The earthly hopes of those people fell down before the cross. But we believe that is it precisely in the Crucified that our hope is reborn. It is

a hope that is different from those of the world. What type of hope is this?

We can be helped to understand this by what Jesus says after entering Jerusalem: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John, 12:24). Let us imagine a grain or a little seed that falls on the ground. If it remains closed up in itself, nothing happens; if instead it breaks, it opens, and then gives life to an ear of grain, a bud, and then to a plant, and the plant will bear fruit.

Jesus has brought in the world a new hope, and He did so in the same way as the seed: He made Himself very small, like an ear of grain; He cast aside His heavenly glory to come among us, and He "fell to the ground". But it still was not enough. To bear fruit, Jesus had to experience love to its limit, allowing Himself to be broken by death like a seed lets itself be broken under the ground. Right there, at the most extreme point to which He was lowered, which is also the highest point of love, hope germinated. If someone among you were to ask, "How is hope born?" "From the cross. Look at the cross, look at the Crucified Christ and from there you will arrive at the hope that never disappears, the one that lasts up to eternal life". And this hope germinated precisely from the strength of love: because the love that "hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor., 13:7), the love that is the life of God has renewed everything it has reached. In this way, at Easter, Jesus took upon Himself and transformed our sin into forgiveness, our death into resurrection, our fear into trust. This is how there, on the cross, our hope was born and is reborn always; this is why with Jesus our darkness can become light, every defeat can become victory, every disappointment can become hope. Every one: yes, every one. Hope overcomes everything, because it is born of the love that Jesus made of Himself, like the grain of wheat in the ground that died to give life, and from that life full of love comes hope.

When we choose the hope of Jesus, gradually we discover that the winning way of living is that of the seed, that of humble love. There is no other way for defeating evil and giving hope to the world. But you might ask me, "No, it is a loser's logic!" It may seem that way, that it is a losing logic, because he who loves loses power. Have you ever thought that? He who loves loses power, he who gives loses possession of something, and love is a gift. In reality that logic of the seed that dies, of humble love, is the way of God, and only this bears fruit. We see it in ourselves too: possessing drives us always to want something else: I have obtained something for me, and immediately I want another, bigger, and so on, and I am never satisfied. That is an ugly thirst! The more you have, the more you want. Those greedy are never satiated. And Jesus said this clearly: "Whoever loves his life loses it" (John 12:25). You may be greedy and try to have many things but ... you will lose it all, even your life, so that he who loves his own life and lives for his own interests is full of himself only, and loses. Instead, he who accepts and is willing to serve, lives according to God; and so he is victorious, he saves himself and others. ... Perhaps we will tire! But life is like this, and the heart fills with joy and hope. This is love and hope together: serving and giving.

Certainly, this true love passes through the cross of sacrifice, as for Jesus. The cross is the obligatory passage, but it is not the destination, it is a passage: the destination is glory, as Easter shows us. And here another beautiful image comes to our aid, that Jesus left to the disciples during the Last Supper. He says, "When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world" (John 16:21). There: giving life, not possessing it. And this is what mothers do: they give another life, they suffer, but then they are joyful, happy because they have brought to light another life. It gives joy: love brings life to light, and at even makes sense of pain. Love is the motor that makes our hope carry on. And each one of us might ask: "Do I love? Have I learned to love? Do I learn to love more every day?", because love is the motor that makes our hope carry on.

Dear brothers and sisters, in these days, days of love, let us allow ourselves to be surrounded by the mystery of Jesus Who, like a grain of wheat, died to give us life. He is the seed of our hope. Let us contemplate the Crucified, the wellspring of hope. Gradually we will understand that to hope with Jesus is to learn to see already the plant in the seed, Easter in the cross, life in death. Now I would like to give you some homework. It is good for all of us to pause in front of the Crucified – you all have one at home – to look at him and to say, "With You, nothing is lost. With You I can always hope. You are my hope". Let us imagine the Crucified now, and let us all say to the Crucified Jesus three times, "You are my hope". All of us: "You are my hope". Louder! "You are my hope". Thank you.

## Greetings in various languages

### French

I am glad to welcome French-speaking pilgrims, especially the participants in the UNIV meeting and the faithful from France and Belgium. During this Holy Week, I invite you to contemplate Jesus Crucified, to understand that to hope with Jesus means to learn to see the resurrection in the cross, life in death. Look at Him and say to Him, "With you, nothing is lost, with you we can always hope". God bless you.

### English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Nigeria, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. I offer a particular greeting to many student groups present. May this Lenten journey bring all of us to Easter with hearts purified and renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God bless you!

### German

I address a cordial greeting to all German-speaking pilgrims, especially the members and friends of *Regnum Christi of Bad Münstereifel*. Let us contemplate the mystery of Jesus, Who with His death on the cross bore much fruit for all of us. I especially encourage the young people present: be a seed of hope for your neighbours! God bless you all.

### Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, in particular the groups from Spain and Latin America. I encourage you to journey towards the destination of our hope, contemplating the cross like the pain of a mother at the moment of giving birth. When new life is born, we will no longer remember the suffering, because Paschal joy will inundate us with its light. God bless you.

### Portuguese

I offer a heartfelt greeting to all Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, especially the faithful of Braga, workers from the municipality of Gondomar and the members of the "Senior University" of Lousada. Take as a friend and model of life the Virgin Mary, who remained at Jesus' cross; she too loved up to the end. Those who love pass from death to life: it is love that makes Easter. I wish a serene and holy Easter to all of you and your loved ones.

### Arabic

I address a warm welcome to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Middle East. Dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow the Paschal Triduum begins: while you keep your gaze fixed on the passion and the death of the Lord, welcome in your hearts the greatness of His love and fill your life with the joy of the Resurrection. Happy Easter.

### **Polish**

I cordially welcome Polish pilgrims. Dear brothers and sisters, we are entering into the mysteries of the passion, the death and the resurrection of the Lord. May the Paschal Triduum be for you and for your loved ones a time of hope that leads to inner peace and the desire to participate in the glorious life of Christ. Let us pause before His cross and before the empty tomb to convince ourselves that with Him, nothing is lost, in Him we can always hope. He is our hope. With this greeting, I give you my heartfelt blessing.

### **Italian**

Dear Italian speaking pilgrims, welcome!

I am pleased to welcome the participants in the fiftieth Congress for university students, organised by the Prelature of Opus Dei, dedicated to reflection on the theme of the world in movement. I greet the members of the Scopigno Cup Sporting Association, accompanied by the bishop of Rieti, Msgr. Domenico Pompili, and the students of the San Vincenzo de' Paoli Institute of Reggio Emilia, who are remembering the foundation of their first school. May your visit to the Eternal City at Easter be a fruitful occasion for rediscovering the joy of giving, that fills the heart more than having.

A special thought goes to the young, the sick and newly weds. Yesterday we remembered St. Gemma Galgani, apostle of the passion of Jesus. Dear young people, following her school, live the Paschal Triduum reflecting on the love of Jesus, Who died on the cross for us; dear sick people, may Good Friday show you patience even in discomfort; and you, dear newly-weds, live in hope even the difficult moments of your new family.

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