



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 9.25 a.m. 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 "Mary Magdalen, Apostle of hope" (cf. Jn 20:15-18).

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!

In these weeks our reflection moves, so to speak, in the orbit of the Paschal Mystery. Today we encounter she who, according to the Gospels, first saw Jesus risen: Mary Magdalen. She had just come to the end of her Sabbath rest. On the day of the passion there had been no time to perform the funerary rites; therefore, in that dawn full of sadness, the women go to the tomb of Jesus with perfumed oils. The first to arrive is she: Mary of Magdala, one of the disciples who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee, serving the nascent Church. Her journey to the tomb reflects the loyalty of so many women who have devoted themselves for years on the paths

of cemeteries, in memory of someone who is no more. The most authentic ties are not even broken by death: there are those who continue to love, even if the loved one has gone forever.

The Gospel (cf. Jn 20:1-2-11-18) describes the Magdalen by immediately showing that she was not an easily enthused woman. Indeed, after her first visit to the tomb, she returns disappointed to the place where the disciples were in hiding, informing them that the stone had been moved from the entrance to the tomb, and her first hypothesis was the simplest that could have been formulated: someone must have taken away Jesus' body. Therefore, the first announcement that Mary brings is not that of the Resurrection, but rather of a theft perpetrated by persons unknown, while all Jerusalem was sleeping.

Then the Gospels recount the Magdalen's second journey to Jesus' tomb. She was headstrong! She went, then she returned ... because she was not convinced! This time, her steps are slow and heavy. Mary suffers twofold: firstly for the death of Jesus, and then for the inexplicable disappearance of His body.

It is while she is bowed near the tomb, her eyes full of tears, that God surprises her in the most unexpected way. The evangelist John stresses the persistence of her blindness: she is not aware of the presence of two angels who question her, and does not even suspect when she sees the man behind her, thinking he is the custodian of the garden. And instead, she discovers the most disconcerting event of human history, when finally she is called by name: "Mary!" (v. 16).

How beautiful it is to think that the first apparition of the Risen Christ – according to the Gospels – happened in such a personal way! That there is someone who knows us, who sees our suffering and disillusionment, is moved for us, and calls us by name. It is a law we find inscribed in many pages of the Gospel. Around Jesus there are many people who seek God; but the most prodigious reality is that, long beforehand, there is first God Who is concerned about our life, who wants to lift it up, and to do this He calls us by name, recognizing the personal face of each person. Every man is a love story that God writes on this earth. Each one of us is a story of love with God. God calls each one of us by name: He knows us by name, He looks at us, He awaits us, He forgives us, He is patient with us. Is this true, or is it not? Each one of us has this experience.

And Jesus calls to her: "Mary!" – the revolution of her life, the revolution destined to transform the existence of every man and woman, beginning with a name that echoes in the garden of the empty tomb. The Gospels describe Mary's joy: the resurrection of Jesus is not a joy measured drop by drop, but rather it is a wave that overwhelms everything. Try to think, you too, in this moment, with the baggage of disappointment and defeat that each one of us carries in our heart, that there is a God close to us Who calls us by name and says to us: "Rise up again, stop crying, because I have come to free you!" This is beautiful.

Jesus is not one who adapts to the world, tolerating that in which there persist death, sadness, hatred, and the moral destruction of people. ... Our God is not inert, but our God – if I may permit myself to use the word – is a dreamer: He dreams of the transformation of the world, and achieved this in the mystery of the Resurrection.

Mary wishes to embrace her Lord, but He is now destined for the heavenly Father, while she is sent to take the news to her brothers. And so that woman, who before encountering Jesus was at the mercy of the evil one (cf. Lk 8:2), has now become the *apostle of the new and greatest hope*. May her intercession help us too to live this experience: at the time of sorrow, and at the hour of desperation, to listen to the Risen Jesus Who calls us by name, and with a heart full of joy, to go and announce: "I have seen the Lord!" (v. 18). I have changed my life because I have seen the Lord! Now I am different to before, I am another person. I have changed, because I have seen the Lord. This is our strength and this is our hope. Thank you".

Greetings in various languages

French

I cordially greet French-speaking pilgrims, in particular the Defence College of Otan, the group from the Catholic University of Leuven, the diocese pilgrimage of Gand and faithful from France, Switzerland and Cote d'Ivoire.

Brothers and sisters, Mary Magdalen would have wanted to embrace the Lord. But He sends her to take the good news to the Apostles. We too, at the time of weeping and abandonment, are able to listen to Jesus Who calls us by name and invites us to take the good news to our brothers.

German

With affection I greet the brothers and sisters from German-speaking countries. God never leaves us alone in the hardships and needs of life. The Risen Lord calls us by name, like the Magdalen, and wants that we too become, in our world, messengers of Paschal joy and apostles of His hope. For this, may the Holy Spirit give us the strength of His grace.

English

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, particularly the groups from England, Ireland, Swaziland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, Canada and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

Spanish

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, in particular the groups from Spain and Latin America. I encourage you to persevere in prayer and in listening to the Word of God so that in times of pain and abandonment, you may hear the risen Jesus call you by name, and come with a joyful heart to announce to all the Good News of the Resurrection. God bless you.

Portuguese

I greet all Portuguese pilgrims, especially Brazilians from Bahia, Fortaleza and Brasília. Dear friends, the Lord is always alongside us, even in the darkest moments of our lives. Let us be enlightened by the presence of the Risen Lord and become His witnesses in the world. God bless you.

Polish

I am delighted to welcome Polish pilgrims, and in particular the veterans of the Polish Second Corps, who are in Italy for the anniversary of the Battle of Montecassino. I greet all the fighters here who, during the Second World War, fought for the freedom of your country and other nations. May your efforts and commitment, and the sacrifice of life of your companions, bear the fruit of peace in Europe and around the world. I offer my heartfelt blessing to all of you here, and to your families. Praised be Jesus Christ!

Arabic

I cordially greet Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Lebanon, Jordan and the Middle East. Mary Magdalen brought the hope of the Resurrection to the disciples, so that they too could bring this Good News to the whole world. The Magdalen teaches us to persevere in seeking the encounter with the Risen One, not to allow the bitterness of death and mourning to extinguish in us the desire to meet Jesus, and to let our encounter with Him transform our sadness into joy and turn us into His witnesses. May the encounter with the Risen Lord revive us and help us to resurrect others from the dark tombs of unbelief. The Lord bless you all and protect you from the evil one!

Italian

Dear Italian pilgrims, welcome! I am pleased to welcome the Monfortan Missionaries of the Society of Mary on the occasion of the General Chapter and the Perpetual Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, and urge them to renew their dedication to their respective founding charisms, to convey God's love and mercy in today's ecclesial context.

I greet the priests, teachers in the major seminaries and higher institutes affiliated to the Pontifical Urbanian University; the faithful of Andria and Paterno di Avezzano; the staff of the State Police of the province of Ancona; the Happy Grandparents Association and the Rigopiano Victims Committee.

May the visit to the Tombs of the Apostles in the Marian month increase in all of you the devotion to the Mother of God, so that you may be missionary disciples of the Paschal joy of the Resurrection.

I address a special greeting to young people, the sick and newlyweds. Today we celebrate the liturgical memory of St. Paschal Baylon, patron of the Eucharistic Associations. May his love for the Eucharist show to you, dear young people, the importance of faith in the real presence of Jesus. May the Eucharistic Bread support you, dear people who are sick, to face hardships with serenity, and may it be nourishment for you, dear newlyweds, in the human and spiritual growth of your new family.
