

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE  
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 180606a

Wednesday 06.06.2018

## **General Audience**

### **Catechesis of the Holy Father**

### **Greetings in various languages**

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.25 a.m. in Saint 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, continuing the new cycle of catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation, focused on the theme of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Biblical passage: from the Gospel of John 20: 19-22).

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!

Continuing the reflection on the Sacrament of Confirmation, let us consider the effects that the gift of the Holy Spirit allows to ripen in the confirmed, leading them to become, in turn, a gift for others. It is a gift, the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that when the bishop anoints us with the oil, he says, "Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". That gift of the Holy Spirit enters into us and becomes fruitful, so that we can then give it to others. Always receive to give: never receive and keep things inside, as if the soul were a warehouse. No: always receive to give. God's

graces are received to be given to others. This is the life of the Christian. It is typical of the Spirit, then, to decentralize ourselves from our “I”, so as to open ourselves to the “we” of the community: to receive so as to give. We are not at the centre: we are a tool of that gift for others.

Completing the resemblance to Christ in the baptized, Confirmation *unites them more strongly as living members of the mystical body of the Church* (cf. *Rite of Confirmation*, 25). The Church’s mission in the world proceeds through the contribution of all those who are part of it. Some think that there are masters in the Church: the Pope, the bishops, the priests, and then there are the others. No: we are all the Church! And we all have the responsibility of sanctifying each other, of taking care of others. We are all the Church. Each person has his work in the Church, but we are all part of her. We must think of the Church as a living organism, composed of people we know and walk with, and not as an abstract and distant reality. The Church is us, we who walk, we are the Church, today in this square. Us: this is the Church. The Confirmation binds to the universal Church, dispersed all over the earth, but actively involving the confirmed in the life of the particular Church to which they belong, with at its head the bishop, who is the successor of the Apostles.

And this is why the bishop is the *original minister* of Confirmation (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 26), because he integrates the confirmed person into the Church. The fact that, in the Latin Church, this Sacrament is ordinarily conferred by the bishop highlights that “its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1313).

And this ecclesial incorporation is well signified by the sign of peace that concludes the ritual of chrismation. Indeed, the bishop says to each of the newly confirmed: “Peace be with you”. Recalling Christ’s greeting to the disciples on the evening of Passover, filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. *Jn* 20: 19-23) – we have heard – these words illuminate a gesture that “demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful” (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1301). We, in Confirmation, receive the Holy Spirit and peace: that peace that we must give to others. But let us think: each person think of his own parish community, for example. There is the ceremony of Confirmation, and then we give peace: the bishop gives it to the confirmand, and then in the Mass, we exchange a sign of peace among ourselves. This means harmony, it means charity between us, it means peace. But then what happens? We go outside and start to speak badly of others, “flaying” them. The gossip starts. And gossip is war. This is not good! If we have received the sign of peace with the strength of the Holy Spirit, we must be men and women of peace, and not destroy, with the tongue, the peace that the Spirit has made. Poor Holy Spirit, the task He has with us, with this habit of gossiping! Think about it: gossip is not the work of the Holy Spirit, it is not the work of the unity of the Church. Gossip destroys what God makes. But please: stop gossiping!

Confirmation is received only once, but the spiritual dynamism inspired by the holy anointing persists through time. We will never complete our fulfilment of the mandate of diffusing everywhere to good scent of a holy life, inspired by the fascinating simplicity of the Gospel.

Nobody receives Confirmation only for himself, but rather to cooperate in the spiritual growth of others. Only in this way, by opening ourselves and coming out of ourselves to meet our brothers, can we truly grow and not merely deceive ourselves we are doing so. What we receive as a gift from God must in fact be given – a gift is to be given – in order to be fruitful, and not buried because of selfish fears, as the parable of the talents teaches (cf. *Mt* 25: 14-30). The seed too, when we have the seed in our hand, it is not to put it there, in the cupboard, to leave it there: it is to be sown. We must give the gift of the Holy Spirit to the community. I urge the confirmed to not “cage” the Holy Spirit, not to resist the Wind that blows so as to push them to walk in freedom, not to stifle the burning Fire of charity that leads to consuming life for God and for brothers. May the Holy Spirit grant us all the apostolic courage to communicate the Gospel, with words and deeds, to all those we meet on our way. With words and deeds, but good words: those which edify. Not the words of gossip that destroy. Please, when you leave the church, think that the peace received is to be given to others: not to be destroyed with gossip. Do not forget this.

## Greetings in various languages

### *French*

I am pleased to welcome pilgrims from France and the various French-speaking countries. I greet in particular those from the diocese of Saint-Claude with the bishop, Msgr. Jordy; those from the Canadian diocese of Valleyfield, with the bishop Msgr. Simard; the *Société des Deux Cœurs d'Amour* with Msgr. Rivière, bishop of Autun, as well as the *Notre Dame d'Arménie* choir. May the Holy Spirit give us the apostolic courage to communicate the Gospel, with words and deeds, to all those we meet on our journey. God bless you!

### *English*

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, particularly those from Ireland, Norway, Nigeria, China, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

### *German*

I extend a cordial greeting to German-speaking pilgrims. May the Holy Spirit give us the apostolic courage to bear witness to Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, through words and deeds, to those we meet on our way. God bless you and your families.

### *Spanish*

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims from Spain and Latin America. In a special way, I greet the leaders and members of the COPE Network, on the occasion of their annual convention, who are accompanied by the President of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, Cardinal Ricardo Blázquez Pérez.

I encourage you to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in your lives, so that He may give you the courage to communicate and proclaim the joy of the Gospel, with words and deeds, to those you meet on the path of life. God bless you. Thank you very much.

### *Portuguese*

Dear Portuguese-speaking pilgrims: welcome! I greet in particular the Brazilian groups from Ourinhos, Goiânia, Bauru and Venâncio Aires. All of us who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit must invoke it more often, so that He may guide us on the path of the disciples of Jesus, who are called to be Christians in all the circumstances and decisions of life. God bless you!

### *Arabic*

I cordially greet the Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the Holy Land, from Egypt and the Middle East. No one receives the sacrament of Confirmation only for himself, but to participate in the spiritual growth of others. The Gifts of God are granted to us so that we may give them to others, as they increase with sharing and disappear with selfishness. Therefore, we must not be afraid to offer what we continually receive from the Holy Spirit, through the witness of a holy life and by spreading of the fragrance of His living Word among our brothers. May the Lord bless you all and protect you from the evil one!

### *Polish*

I cordially greet Polish pilgrims. Dear brothers and sisters, you have come on a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul. Their testimony teaches us that the evangelical beatitudes can only be practised "if the

Holy Spirit fills us with His power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency and our pride” (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, 65 ). Let yourselves be guided by His strength, so that you may be blessed messengers of the Good News of Christ. May the Lord bless you!

***Italian***

I extend a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking faithful.

I am pleased to welcome the Brothers of the Christian Schools; the parishes, in particular those of Giugliano in Campania and Altamura, and the participants in the pilgrimage from Macerata to Loreto, accompanied by the bishops Msgr. Nazzareno Marconi and Msgr. Giancarlo Vecerrica.

I greet the Association of Rescue and Civil Protection Volunteers of Cellamare; the “*L'imprevisto*” Cooperative of Pesaro, and the “Rinascita” Group of Teolo.

On Friday we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Throughout the month of June, I invite you to pray to the Heart of Jesus and to support your priests with closeness and affection, so that they may be images of that Heart full of merciful love.

I address a special thought to the young, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Draw from the Heart of Jesus the spiritual food and drink of your life, so that, nourished by Christ, you may be new people, profoundly transformed by that divine love.

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