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# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

**N. gen**

**Wednesday 15.03.2017**

## **General Audience**

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

### **Greetings in various languages**

This morning's General Audience took place at 9.30 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, resuming his cycle of catechesis on Christian hope, focused on the theme "Rejoice in hope" (cf. Romans 12:9-13). 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 Lord's Prayer and the Apostolic Blessing.

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

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

We are well aware that the great commandment that the Lord Jesus gave us is to love: to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (cf. Matthew 22:37-39); that is, we are called to love and to charity. And this is our highest vocation, our quintessential vocation; and it is linked to the joy of Christian hope. He who loves has the joy of hope, of reaching the great love that is the Lord.

The Apostle Paul, in the passage from the Letter to the Romans that we have just heard, warns us against the risk that our charity may be hypocritical, that our love may be hypocritical. We must ask ourselves, then: when does this hypocrisy happen? And how can we be sure that our love is sincere, that our charity is authentic? That we do not give false charity, that our love is not a soap opera: [that it is] sincere and strong love...

Hypocrisy can penetrate anywhere, even in our way of loving. This happens when our love is driven by personal interests; and how much self-seeking love there is; when our charitable service, to which it seems we are committed, is performed to display ourselves, or for our own satisfaction: “But how good I am!” – No, this is hypocrisy! Or when we aim at things which have “visibility” to make a show of our intelligence or our capability. Behind all this there is a false, deceptive idea; that is, if we love, it is because we are good; as if charity were a creation of man, a product of our heart. Charity, instead, is first and foremost a grace, a gift; being able to love is a gift of God, and we must ask for it. And He gives this gladly, if we ask for it. Charity is a grace: it does not consist of making visible what we are, but that which the Lord gives us and that we freely receive, and cannot be expressed in the encounter with others if it is not first generated by the encounter with the gentle and merciful face of Jesus.

Paul invites us to acknowledge that we are sinners, and that our way of loving is also marked by sin. At the same time, though, it is the bearer of a new proclamation, a proclamation of hope; the Lord opens before us a way of liberation, a way of salvation. It is also the possibility of living the great commandment of love, of becoming instruments of God’s charity. And this happens when we let our heart be healed and renewed by the risen Christ. The risen Lord Who lives in our midst, Who lives with us is capable of healing our heart: He does this if We ask Him to. It is He Who permits us, even in our smallness and poverty, to experience the compassion of the Father and to celebrate the wonders of His love. And thus one understands that all that we can live and do for our brothers is none other than the response to what God has done and continues to do for us. Indeed, it is God Himself Who, dwelling in our heart and in our life, continues to draw close to and to serve all those we meet every day of our journey, starting from the least and those most in need, in whom He first identifies.

The Apostle Paul, with these words, does not therefore wish to rebuke us, but rather to encourage us and to revive hope in us. Indeed, we all have the experience of not living the commandment of love fully or as we should. But this too is a grace, as it enables us to understand that by ourselves we are not capable of loving truly: we need the Lord to continually renew in us this gift in our heart, through the experience of His infinite mercy. And only then will we again appreciate small things, simple, ordinary things; only then will we be able to appreciate all these little everyday things and be able to love others as God loves them, wishing them well, that is, that they may be holy, friends of God; and we will be content to have the opportunity to be close to the poor and humble, as Jesus did with each of us when we were distant from Him; of kneeling at the feet of our brothers as He, the Good Samaritan, does with each of us, with His compassion and His forgiveness.

Dear brothers, what the Apostle Paul reminds us of is the secret of, and I use his words, the secret of being able “rejoice in hope” (Romans 12:12): rejoice in hope. The joy of hope, so that we know that in every circumstance, even the most adverse, and even amid our own shortcomings, that God’s love is never lacking. And so, with our heart visited and inhabited by His grace and His faithfulness, let us live in the joyful hope of exchanging with our brothers, for what little we can, the much we receive every day from Him. Thank you.

### Greetings in various languages

#### French

#### Holy Father:

I cordially greet French-speaking pilgrims, in particular the *Chemins d’Humanité* Association with Msgr. Jean Luc Brunin, bishop of Le Havre. Be full of hope in your Lenten journey, sure that, even amid our shortcomings, God’s love is stronger and gives us the opportunity to renew our heart to be at His service and at the service of our brothers. God bless you!

## English

### Holy Father:

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Sweden, Canada and the United States of America. I offer a special welcome to the many student groups present. With prayerful good wishes that this Lent will be a time of grace and spiritual renewal for you and your families, I invoke upon all of you joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all!

## German

### Holy Father:

I greet with affection the pilgrims from German-speaking countries, as well as the Netherlands. A special welcome goes to the Cäcilienverband group of the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, accompanied by Msgr. Johannes Kreidler. Formed by the grace of the Lord and filled with divine hope, may we be able to reciprocate in our brothers the love that God gives us every day. Have a good stay in Rome and a good Lent.

## Spanish

### Holy Father:

I cordially greet Spanish-speaking pilgrims, especially groups from Spain and Latin America. In this time of Lent, I invite you, joyful in hope, to revive in your hearts the love that you have received from God, and to share it with all men in sincere works of charity. God bless you.

## Portuguese

### Holy Father:

I cordially greet Portuguese-speaking pilgrims, especially the *Amadora* group and citizens of the "*freguesia lisboeta de Santo António*", led by the Mayor. May the Lord bless you and fill you with joy, and the Holy Spirit illuminate the decisions of your life, so that you may faithfully fulfil the will of the heavenly Father. May the Virgin Mother of God and of the Church watch over you and your families and communities.

## Arabic

### Holy Father:

I address a cordial greeting to Arabic-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Syria, Lebanon and the Middle East. Love lived with hypocrisy is graver than hatred; it is selfishness masked and disguised as love. True love, instead, as St. Paul teaches us, "is patient ... kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not

delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). May the Lord bless you all and protect you from the evil one!

## Polish

### Holy Father:

I greet Polish pilgrims. Brothers and sisters, the time of Lent is particularly opportune for opening hearts to the grace of God's mercy and to experience His love. With the hope that is born of this experience, let us go towards our brothers, especially those who are in need of love and concrete support, so that our witness may help them become friends of God Who forgives. May His blessing accompany you always.

## Italian

### Holy Father:

I address a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims. I am happy to welcome the participants in the Congress organised by the Focolari Movement on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, and I urge them to bear witness to the beauty of new families, guided by Christ's peace and love. Continue in this way! I greet the Arch-Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims of Naples, accompanied by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, members of the Italian-Ukrainian cultural association, the youth orchestra of Laureana di Borrello, the choir of the Catholic Union of Artists of Benevento and the members of the Granarolo Group. I hope that for each one of you this encounter may revive your communion with the universal ministry of Peter's Successor.

I address a special thought to workers of "Sky Italia", and I hope that their employment situation may find a rapid solution, respecting the rights of all, especially families. Work gives us dignity, and leaders of the people and governors have the duty to do everything to ensure that every man and woman may work and be able to hold their head high, to look others in the eye with dignity. Those, who to perform economic manoeuvres, to conduct negotiations that are not entirely clear, close down factories, shut down businesses and take work away from people, commit a very grave sin.

Finally, greetings to the young, the sick and newly-weds. May the liturgical time of Lent favour closeness to God; forego not only meals, but above all, bad habits, dear young people, so as to gain greater mastery of yourselves; may prayer be for you, dear sick people, a way of feeling God's particular closeness in suffering; may the exercise of works of mercy help you, dear newly-weds, to live your marital existence, opening it up to the needs of your brothers.

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