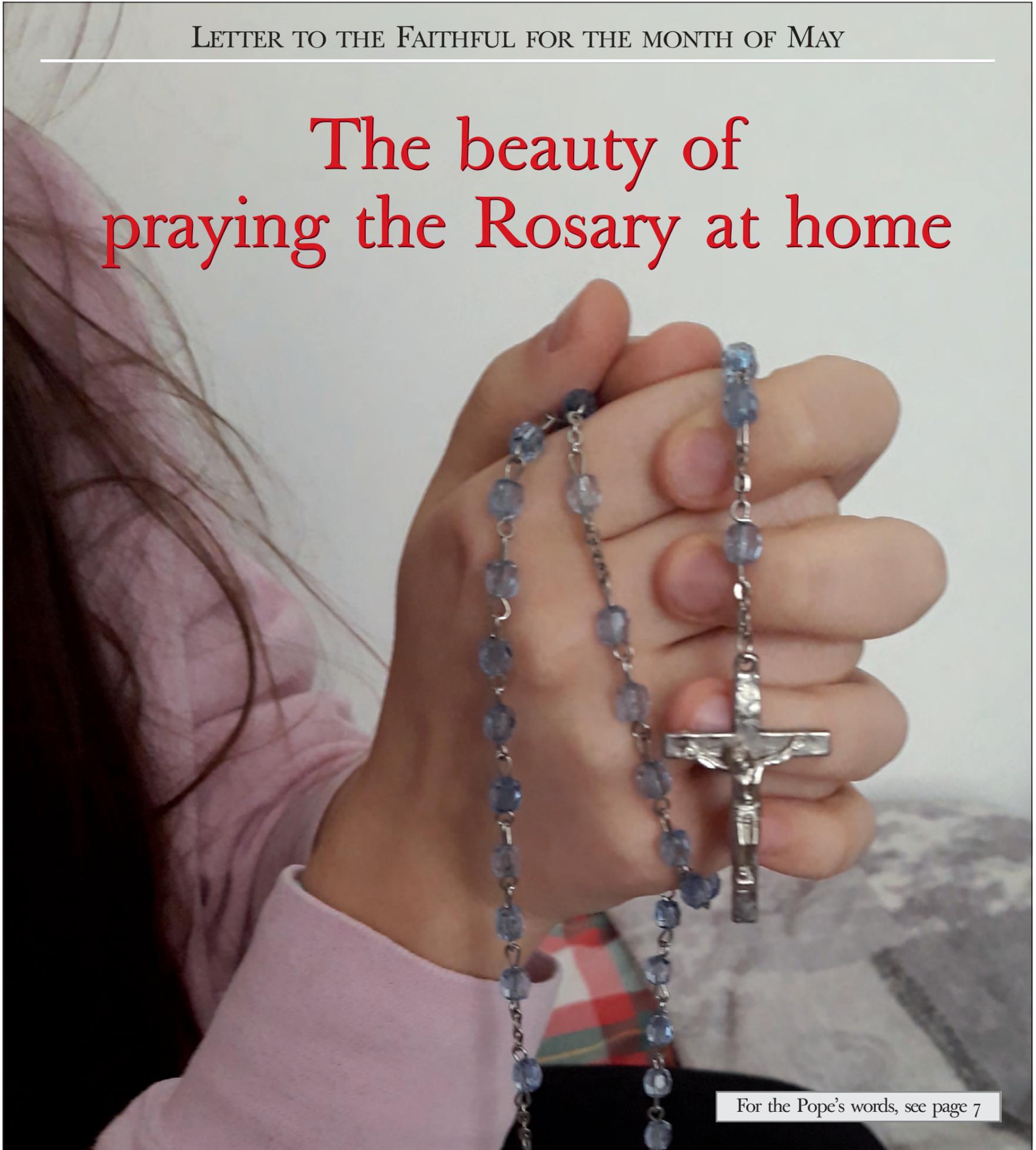


LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

The beauty of praying the Rosary at home



For the Pope's words, see page 7

General Audience

Stop persecutions

PAGE 3

Order of Malta Grand Master dies

Holy Father's telegram

PAGE 2

Interview with Hon. Sassoli

Europe, concrete actions

MONDAY ON PAGE 4/5

Regina Caeli

Sunday's meditation

PAGE 8

VATICAN BULLETIN



AUDIENCES

Friday, 24 April

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Cardinal Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Cardinal Luis Antonio G. Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Héctor Salah Zuleta from his office as Bishop of Riohacha, Colombia (22 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Francisco Antonio Ceballos Escobar, CSSR, as Bishop of Riohacha. Until now he has served as titular Bishop

of Zarna and Vicar Apostolic of Puerto Carreño, Colombia (22 Apr.).

Bishop Ceballos Escobar, 62, was born in Génova, Colombia. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1985. He was ordained a bishop on 30 July 2010, subsequent to his appointment as vicar apostolic of Puerto Carreño and titular Bishop of Zarna.

The Holy Father has accepted the resignation of Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez from his office as Metropolitan Archbishop of Bogotá, Colombia (25 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Luis José Rueda Aparicio as Archbishop of Bogotá. Until now he has served as Archbishop of Popayán, Colombia (25 Apr.).

Archbishop Rueda Aparicio, 58, was born in San Gil, Colombia. He was ordained a priest on 23 Novem-

ber 1989. He was ordained a bishop on 14 April 2012, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Montelibano, Colombia. On 19 May 2018 he was appointed Archbishop of Popayán, Colombia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Paul K. Bakyenga from his office as Archbishop of Mbarara, Uganda (25 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Lambert Bainomugisha as Archbishop of Mbarara. Until now he has

served as Auxiliary Bishop of the same archdiocese (25 Apr.).

Archbishop Bainomugisha, 58, was born in Kashumba, Uganda. He was ordained a priest on 13 July 1991. He was ordained a bishop on 1 October 2005, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Tacía Montana and Auxiliary of Mbarara.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed as Apostolic Nuncio in Niger Archbishop Michael Francis Crotty, titular Archbishop of Lindisfarna and Apostolic Nuncio in Burkina Faso (25 Apr.).

Pope sends condolences to the Order of Malta Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto dies

The Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto died just after midnight on 29 April in Rome, at the age of 75. After learning of the Grand Master's passing, Pope Francis addressed a telegram to Lieutenant ad interim Fra' Ruy Gonçalo do Valle Peixoto de Villas Boas. The following is a translation of the Pope's telegram.

Having learnt the news of the passing of His Most Eminent Highness Frà Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, I wish to express my deepest condolences to the entire order. A zealous man of culture and of faith I recall his total fidelity to Christ and to the Gospel, and his generous commitment in carrying out his office with a spirit of service for the good of the Church, as well as his dedication to those who are suffering the most.

As I participate in your communal grief, I raise prayers of suffrage and I invoke the Divine Goodness for his soul and eternal peace. With these sentiments, I wholeheartedly send to you and to the Grand Magistracy, as well as to the family members of the late Grand Master, my comforting Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Pope Francis institutes the John Paul I Vatican Foundation

The Holy Father, with the *Rescriptum ex audientia Ss.mi* of 17 February 2020, has instituted the John Paul I Vatican Foundation, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law and the fundamental Law of the Vatican City State, thus accepting the proposal to create a body so as to study in depth the person, thought and teachings of his venerable Predecessor, Pope John Paul I – Albino Luciani (26 August 1978 - 28 September 1978) – and to promote the study and dissemination of his writings.

At the same time, the Supreme Pontiff appointed Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, as President of the Foundation (28 Apr.).

Pontiff's Letter to street newspapers

I know you will come back stronger than before

In a letter on Monday, 27 April, the Holy Father expressed his solidarity to all those involved in street newspapers who have been put to the test in these difficult times of pandemic. The following is a translation of his letter.

The lives of millions of people, who are already facing numerous difficult challenges in our world and are oppressed by the pandemic, have changed and are being seriously tested. Those most vulnerable, the invisible, those without an abode run the risk of paying the highest price.

I would therefore like to acknowledge the world of street newspapers, and especially their vendors, who are largely homeless, terribly marginalized and unemployed: thousands of people across the world who live and have a job thanks to selling these extraordinary newspapers.

In Italy, I think of the beautiful experience of the Caritas project *Scarp de' tenis*, which allows more than 130 people facing difficulties to have an income; and through it, to

access fundamental citizens' rights. And not only that. I also think of the experience of more than 100 street newspapers throughout the world, published in 35 countries and in 25 different languages, that provide employment and an income to 20,500 homeless people in the world. For many weeks now, street newspapers have not been sold and their vendors cannot work. I would like therefore to express my solidarity with journalists, volunteers, and people living thanks to these projects who are doing everything they can these days through many innovative ideas.

The pandemic has made your work difficult but I am sure that the great network of street newspapers will come back stronger than ever. Turning our gaze to the poorest these days can help us all realize how much is actually happening to us, and what our condition truly is. My message of encouragement and brotherly friendship goes out to you all. Thank you for the work you do, for the information you provide, and for the stories of hope that you tell.

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH
Unicuique suum Non praevalent

Vatican City
redazione.inglese.or@spc.va
www.osservatoreromano.va

ANDREA MONDA
Editor-in-Chief

Giuseppe Fiorentino
Assistant Editor

Editorial office
via del Pellegrino, 00120 Vatican City
telephone +390669899300, fax +390669883675

TIPOGRAFIA VATICANA EDITRICE
L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

Photo Service
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va

Advertising Agency
Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
segreteria@direzioneromano.it

Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 58.00; Europe: € 100.00 - US\$ 148.00 £ 80.00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 100.00 - US\$ 160.00 - £ 88.00; Oceania, North America: € 162.00 - £ 130.00.
Management Office: phone +390669899480; fax +390669885164; e-mail subscriptions.or@spc.va.
For India: The weekly English Edition of L'Osservatore Romano is published and distributed in India by Carmel International Publishing House, Cotton Hill, Trivandrum- 695 014, Kerala-India; phone: +9147327253; fax: +9147328191; 329934; e-mail: ciph@md4vsnl.net.in; loroccania@carmelpublications.com.
For North America: L'Osservatore Romano (USPS 016-419) is published fifty times per year (weekly, except third week in August and last week in December) by Our Sunday Visitor, L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750. Periodicals Postage Pending at Huntington, IN, and additional mailing offices, USA - phone: 800-348-2440 x2171; fax: 866-891-7390 - e-mail: osvsales@osv.com.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Pope Francis concluded his series of catecheses on the Beatitudes at the General Audience on Wednesday morning, 29 April, and invited the faithful to pray for the many Christians who are currently being persecuted throughout the world for "they are the bleeding limbs of Christ". The following is a translation of his reflection on the eighth Beatitude ("Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven), which he offered in Italian from the library of the Apostolic Palace.



Pope concludes his series of catecheses on the Beatitudes and recalls today's many martyrs

Stop persecution of Christians in the world

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning,

With today's audience, we conclude our journey into the evangelical Beatitudes. As we have heard, the last one proclaims the eschatological joy of those persecuted for righteousness' sake. This Beatitude announces the same happiness as the first one: the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the persecuted as it does to the poor in spirit. We thus understand that we have reached the end of our joint journey revealed in the previous proclamations.

The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who thirst for holiness, mercy, the pure in heart and peacemakers may lead to persecution because of Christ. However, ultimately this persecution is a cause of joy and of great reward in heaven. The way of the Beatitudes is an Easter path that leads us from a life in accord with the world to one of God, from a life led by the flesh – that is by selfishness – to one guided by the Spirit.

With its idols, its compromises and its priorities, the world cannot accept this kind of life. The "structures of sin"¹ that are often produced by the human mind, and are extraneous to the Spirit of truth that the world cannot receive, (cf. Jn 14:17), cannot but reject poverty or meekness or purity and declare life according to the Gospel as a mistake and a problem; thus as something to isolate. This is what the world thinks: "These [people] are idealists or fanatics...". This is how they think.

If the world lives as a function of money, then anyone who demonstrates that life can be lived in [self] giving and sacrifice becomes a nuisance to the system of greed. This word "nuisance" is key because Christian witness, which is so good for many people who follow it, bothers those who have a worldly mindset. They see it as chastising. When holiness appears and the life of the children of God emerges, there is

something uncomfortable in that beauty that demands taking a stance: either to allow oneself to be questioned and to open oneself to the good or reject that light and harden one's heart, even until oppression and fury (cf. Wis 2:14-15). It is interesting and striking to note how hostility grows to fury in the persecution of martyrs. Just look at the persecutions of the last century, of the European dictatorships: how does one get to rage against Christians, against Christian witness and against the heroism of Christians?

But this demonstrates that the tragedy of persecution is also the place of liberation from subjection to the success, vainglory and compromise of the world. What makes those who are rejected by the world because of Christ rejoice? They rejoice at having found something that has more value than the entire world. Indeed: "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mk 8:36). What is the advantage there?

It is painful to recall that in this very moment, there are many Christians in various parts of the world who are suffering from persecution, and we must hope and pray that their trials will soon end. They are many: today's martyrs outnumber the martyrs of the first centuries. Let us express our closeness to these brothers and sisters. We are a single body and these Christians are the bleeding limbs of the body of Christ who is the Church.

But we also have to be careful not to read this Beatitude from a self commiserating, victimized perspective. In fact, mankind's contempt is not always synonymous with persecution: indeed shortly later, Jesus tells

Christians that they are the "salt of the earth" and warns against the danger of "losing their taste" because in that case, salt "is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men" (Mt 5:13). Thus, when we lose the taste of Christ and the Gospel, there is also contempt which is our fault.

We have to be faithful to the humble way of the Beatitudes because it leads us to be of Christ and not of the world. It is worth remembering the journey of Saint Paul. When he thought he was a righteous person, he was in fact a persecutor, but when he found out he was a persecutor, he became a man of love who rejoiced in the suffering of the persecution inflicted on him (cf. Col 1:24).

If God grants us the grace to be more like the Crucified Christ and joined to his Passion, then exclusion and persecution are the manifestation of new life. This life is the same as the life of Christ who was "despised and rejected" for us men and women and for our salvation" (cf. Is 53:3; Acts 8:30-35). Welcoming his

Spirit can lead us to have so much love in our heart as to offer our life for the world without making compromises with its deceit and accepting its rejection.

Compromises with the world are dangerous: Christians are always tempted to make compromises with the world, with the spirit of the world. This – rejecting compromises and journeying on the way of Jesus Christ – is the life of the Kingdom of Heaven, the greatest joy and true happiness. And, in persecutions there is always the presence of Jesus who accompanies us, the presence of Jesus who comforts us and the strength of the Holy Spirit that helps us to go forward. Let us not be discouraged when a life that is faithful to the Gospel draws persecution from people. There is the Holy Spirit who sustains us in this journey.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking faithful joining us through the media. 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!

I offer a special greeting to *young people*, the *elderly*, the *sick* and *newlyweds*. I exhort everyone to be witnesses of the Risen Christ who shows his disciples the now glorious wounds of his Passion. I extend my heartfelt blessing.

¹ Cf. Discourse to participants in a workshop entitled: "New forms of solidarity: Towards fraternal Inclusion, Integration and Innovation", 5 February 2020: "idolatry of money, greed and corruption are all 'structures of sin' – as John Paul II called them – produced by the 'globalization of indifference'".



INTERVIEW

with David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament

Europe means concrete attention to people

Only together can we emerge from the crisis

by ANDREA MONDA

We are speaking to David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament, by telephone on a highly symbolic date, 25 April. Our conversation revolves around the themes of values, freedom, democracy and pluralism which underlie the anniversary. These are not abstract themes; they are the "sources" from which the care and attention for the concrete life of people come about. Once again, it is from this dimension that we have to commence in rebuilding a Europe capable of emerging stronger from the tremendous crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

On several occasions recently, Pope Francis has devoted ample space in his discourses to the theme of Europe. For example, in the Urbi et Orbi Easter message he said that: "After the Second World War, this continent was able to rise again, thanks to a concrete spirit of solidarity that enabled it to overcome the rivalries of the past. It is more urgent than ever, especially in the present circumstances, that these rivalries do not regain force, but that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another. The European Union is presently facing an epochal challenge, on which will depend its future, and that of the whole world. Let us not lose the opportunity to give further proof of solidarity, also by turning to innovative solutions". I wanted to ask you, as a Catholic, as a citizen, as a political representative, and as President of the European Parliament, what effect did the Holy Father make on you when you heard these words?

The effect was that they were a just reminder to face this historic chapter with responsibility; because, it is true that Europe is a community of interests, but it cannot but be other than a community with a common destiny. In addition, at this moment, the Holy Father's call is particularly important because he asks us to be attentive to everyone. I believe that this is the moment when the Europe of States, of nations, of governments, can strengthen its institutions, to be close to all citizens, those of the north and those of the south. To do what? First of all, to review its own model of development, to be able to better protect people and also to safeguard those values that the Holy Father summoned, and which are an indispensable element in sustaining the challenges that the global world proposes to us. We have a responsibility that

also concerns the legacy of values that these seventy years have given us: freedom, democracy, pluralism. I believe that at this time we must be even more proudly faithful to European values because the world needs them.

The European Union (EU) finds itself in a situation of having to harmonize the ideal that drove the founding fathers, with the concreteness – including financial –, required in the various historical and political instances it is facing. To what extent is it possible to find the difficult but necessary balance on each occasion and now especially?

The EU is at a change of phase, which will need vision and pragmatism. Europe is not built just by imagining it as enlightened. Europe is an immense area for political debate, and we want it to be more and more so. But, we also want it to be an area of participation and not just the crude defense of national interests. That is why the European area can also be an example and a model for others; not believing that we are better than others, but that we can offer everyone an important asset. We must show that in freedom, in democracy, respecting the fundamental rights of individuals and the value of life, we live better and we can improve standards of living. If Europe crumbles, who else in the world today would hold high the banner of human rights? Today, the world is asking for more democracy, not less.

The Pope says: "To give further proof of solidarity also by resorting to innovative solutions": at the concrete level, can the measures that came out of the European Council on April 23, for example the Recovery Fund, be considered one of those innovative solutions of which the Pope speaks?

Yes, in the poverty of politics, the Council has taken an important step forward. We entered [the situation] a month and a half ago with our bare hands; we lacked the tools to deal with a crisis that was so deep that it will leave important consequences for our societies, in its wake.

Today, we are emerging from it a little better equipped, with timely interventions, some of which were long overdue, but they have been made quickly. A decision was taken at the Council on Thursday: to open a "reconstruction site" to provide a common European response to the emergency. This is a step forward; and, it was not a foregone conclusion. We must now base this reconstruction plan on solidarity. Let me say, however, that I believe that we will not only come out of this crisis by straightening out material issues; I believe that we will come out of this crisis if material issues are combined with a recovery of values, those European values that are essential today. Therefore, it is good to open up the building site and the debate that will follow, while trying to reconcile sensibilities, points of view and interests. The important thing to stress, however, is that we have heard all the Heads of Government call for a common exit from the crisis. We are coming out together, otherwise it would be a decline for everyone; this was not to be taken for granted a few weeks ago.

You have expressed the need for a "Marshall Plan" for the recovery, financed directly by the Member States of the Union. A strategy that would highlight the strength of the European Union, but above all its ability to be cohesive and supportive. This is what I have interpreted as the message that we really need: proximity and not distance. From the role you play, do you perceive that there has been a snap, a change, that the social dimension has entered the centre of the European Union's thinking?

Yes, because week after week everyone has become aware of the depths of the crisis. And how interdependent and connected the economies of individual states are. Europe is built with its crises, Jean Monnet said. That is how it

is. And at each difficult moment everyone understands that you can't do it alone, that no one is self-sufficient. We said that six weeks ago: either we will come out of this with a better equipped and stronger European Union, or we will not. To do this now we will need to strengthen the institutional level of the Union and make it capable of leading the new phase. Should we fight against selfishness? Yes, we should. Should we fight against an old nationalist idea that exists in all countries? Yes, we do. But, right now we all feel the need for the world to be able to deal with it if our institutions, the European democratic framework, are going to be more robust and able to take decisions quickly. So, it is not just solutions to the crisis as such; we need solutions to the change in phase that this crisis imposes on everyone. Let me give you an example: we cannot and do not want to give up freedoms and democracy, but we must also adapt them so that they are more capable of responding quickly, too.

We need to support an exit process to the crisis by reviewing the way we are. Strengthening Europe also means changing Europe by adapting the instruments with which we entered the storm. I believe this is an effort that concerns Brussels, but it concerns all the capitals, all the countries; they too must change. We also need to have a clear idea in the medium and long term range about where we want to go, what we want to do and how we want to rebuild. Do we want to return to putting the clock back or do we want to set the clock at the right time, in which, with great difficulty, history has placed us? Today, the clock cannot be turned back. In this, Pope Francis' strong appeal to us is all the more precious, he is right and he grasps the point, because democracy is strengthened if it looks to the people, to every person, to the interests and needs of every person. So, the challenge is to reconnect, to rediscover a vocation. Then it is true, we have a plan for reconstruction, a "Marshall Plan", which, however, unlike the Second World War, must be financed by Europeans and will not

be financed by others; a plan which, for example, must tell us how much change in our economic model we want, how much we want to invest in reconstruction on the Green Deal, and digital Europe. The pandemic has confronted us with a challenge, the change of phase, of pace, and this must see us being very careful and able to grasp the new elements. We owe this not only to the tradition and values of Europe; we also owe this to the people who have died, to the people who have left us, to this pain that the world is feeling. We must come out of it by better protecting our societies. Reconstruction is made up of many things, it contains many ingredients.

A few days ago, in an interview with Vatican News, Andrea Riccardi [Italian historian, professor, politician and activist, founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio] stated that in his opinion the pandemic has not made shared action more difficult, but easier; consequently, the cohesion of everyone to try to change the situation. But, he also noted how the EU in the past, and perhaps even today, has neglected human topics, the issues of bonding. The attention to people that Pope Francis insists on reminds us that this is the answer to the real problem of European society, of Western societies, the problem of the great loneliness of people. Paradoxically, the coronavirus, that condemns us to isolation, has revealed a fact that was already present, this great loneliness. Is it for politics to respond to this, and how?

I am convinced that this phase, even as painful as it is, is bringing out so many elements of humanity. Politics, too, when it comes out of its oppositions, perhaps even makes this humanity evident. I am referring, for example, to certain measures, to good practices that many European governments, both in the north and in the south, are adopting at the moment and which could perhaps be useful and serve as examples. In Portugal, a law has been passed to give a fictitious address to homeless people and migrants so as to permit them access to social care and health services. I believe that

this way of tackling the crisis, drawing on the experiences that civil societies are having, is very important because a policy without citizens lives in an ivory tower and becomes bureaucracy.

Therefore, I think that we will emerge from this period by strengthening our humanity, which at this moment is manifesting itself throughout Europe; this humanity is a great wealth and will also prove to be this period's redemption. Then, we must also not fall into visions of the enlightenment, because we know that it is not sufficient to imagine the new world; we must build it. We must do this step by step, battle after battle, supporting every step with consensus, because democracy is consensus, and find solutions through shared decisions. This is the time for great reflection on the way politics works. I would like to stress, however, that we are witnessing extraordinary things that are part of the generosity of the men and women who are fighting at the moment, who are rolling up their sleeves; think of all the associations that are being mobilized throughout Europe at the moment: what energy they are demonstrating! I therefore believe that we can be filled with hope, compared to the fatigue and pain of these dramatic events. For us, this is a necessity: we need to charge up and recharge hope, and we can only do so if we [the EU] are close to people.

What role can the European Union play in the global post-pandemic setting? Can the EU become a role model?

It has to become a model, because otherwise it would have no function. Unfortunately, in the European area there are viruses other than Covid, which have always tormented the European spirit. One is certainly anti-Semitism and the other is nationalism, which are catalysts that produce division, enemy construction, hatred, and even wars in Europe. We must make the European area, which it already is, even more a point of reference; but, an area of freedom cannot live without responsibility and solidarity. I believe that this is Europe's vocation, which our



Society needs to be constantly regenerated. I recall the figure of Senator Roberto Ruffilli, who on 16 April 1988 was barbarously killed by terrorists; one thinks that from the Christian point of view to "fertilize" one must give life, the seed that dies produces much fruit. Ruffilli had dedicated his whole life to the ideal of freedom and democracy, his book was entitled "Il cittadino come arbitro" [The Citizen as Arbitrator]. Is democracy also at stake today in this crisis in Europe?

I was very close friends with Roberto. His testimony is truly an example. That title, *Il cittadino come arbitro* is very topical. It calls upon us to make sure that everything that comes out of the crisis has been done for the people, not just to sew up the holes within power dynamics. That is why we must come out of this crisis by strengthening democratic processes. But how many people today are working to divide the European area? And why is there so much effort to divide us, to make us weaker, to fragment us, to take us back to our small homeland? Why is there this strong dynamic coming from outside Europe, that triggers this desire to weaken us? And yet we do not have an army, we do not go to war, we do not invade countries ... I believe that the answer is because European values and European law are elements of strong contradiction at the moment with respect to global dynamics that see a resumption of authoritarianism. That is why Pope Francis did very well to call Europeans to take responsibility, so that at this moment they can be a point of reference for re-appropriating values that are truly important for man: the value of life, the value of people's inalienable rights, the right to freedom; references that we take for granted, but that are not so throughout the world.

Yes, they can, but this must not be an alibi for those who are not Catholics, because the risk is to assign a responsibility to Catholics that must belong to everyone. It is always a burden on others, and that is not good. According to the Epistle to Diognetus, Christians live within society, not outside of it. And others must also live in society and must collaborate. Everyone must do their part. In Europe there are so many sensitivities, so many cultures and everyone must carry their own share of the responsibility. Certainly Catholics, Christians, will do this, but at this moment I believe that it is Europe as a whole that must have broad shoulders to assume a function in the eyes of the world. For Christians, I believe it is natural to think that the life of others, of those who are outside of our space, is the same as ours, that they should have the same rights. This is normal for Christians. That is why I believe that Pope Francis' words are impressing everyone and are calling everyone to [a sense of] responsibility, even non-believers.

Is Cardinal Hollerich of Luxembourg right then, in saying recently in "La Civiltà Cattolica": "Europe cannot be rebuilt without an idea of Europe without ideals"?

Certainly. But, we do have ideals even if we find it so hard to express them. The problem is that all too often, each nation's selfishness, that mean-spirited nationalist feeling, the idea that "I am better than the other", prevents us from unfolding our potential and manifesting our identity. I believe that this crisis could be an opportunity to free ourselves from the many chains that bind us.

Tuesday, 7 April

For people suffering from unjust sentences

During his homily for Holy Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 7 April, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of recognizing that we were chosen. Commenting on the day's first Reading (Is 49:1-6), he said that just like the prophet Isaiah had been chosen before he was born, so we too were chosen from our mothers' womb with the vocation of serving. "Each one of us has a destiny ... the destiny of being chosen by God", he explained. We were chosen, "to be a child of God, to be a servant of God with the task of serving".

Jesus is our example of service as his glory was to serve until death, the Holy Father continued. Indeed, to serve is not to demand any benefit for ourselves other than that of serving. When we distance ourselves from the attitude of serving, this makes us "people who have apostasized" which leads to building

"mouth and the heart of a disciple". His love of money led him beyond rules, and the Pope added, there is only a small step that separates stealing from betraying. Indeed, "those who love money too much betray [others] in order to have even more". Thus despite having had good intentions at first, Judas becomes a traitor.

The story of Judas also reveals that the devil is a poor paymaster: "He is not reliable. He promises everything, shows you everything and in the end leaves you alone in despair to hang yourself". In fact, when Judas, restless and tormented between greed and love of Jesus, returns to the priests to ask for forgiveness, they turn their backs on him and his despair.

There are many "institutionalised Judases in this world who exploit people", the Holy Father said, but he reminded the faithful that there is also some of Judas in each of us, especially when we have to choose between loyalty and self interest. We all "have the ability to betray" and the opportunity to be attracted "by love of money, goods or future well-being".

demic, "we will either bet on life, in favour of the resurrection of our people, or we will bet on the god of money". Betting on money would mean choosing the tomb of hunger, slavery, war and arms production, leaving children without education.

At the end of his homily, the Holy Father prayed that the Lord will help us to always choose the good of the people and not to fall into the tomb of the god of money.

Tuesday, 14 April

For greater unity

During his homily at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 14 April, Pope Francis commented on Peter's invitation to conversion on Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41). To repent, he said, means returning to faithfulness. "There are always illusions that attract our attention, and often we follow after these illusions". However, the Holy Father pointed out, we are called to be faithful both in good times and in bad ones.

Self assuredness, Pope Francis warned, leads to unfaithfulness as witnessed by the first King of Judah, Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:1) who felt that his kingdom was so secure that he abandoned the Lord's law and all of Israel followed him. "Many times when we feel secure we begin to make plans and we slowly drift away from the Lord". This is because we believe that our security no longer comes from the Lord but rather from an idol.

However, feeling secure is not a bad thing, said Pope Francis. "It is a grace: being secure in the knowledge that the Lord is with me". But when we place ourselves at the centre, we stop being faithful and security becomes a crutch that leads to sin. And this occurs often, for the "history of Israel, and the whole history of the Church is full of infidelity". Indeed, Pope Francis continued, "even among us, between people, faithfulness is not a virtue that is highly valued".

The day's Gospel Reading from John (21:11-18) offers a key to understanding fidelity in the figure of Mary Magdalene who waited and wept outside Jesus' tomb. She "is an icon of fidelity... She was there, faithful before the impossible, before the tragedy. Hers is a faithfulness that led her to think she could carry away his body". Pope Francis prayed that we may have the grace to be faithful "even before the tomb and the collapse of so many illusions" and to thank him when he gives us security.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

lives based on other kinds of love that are often idolatrous and cause the loss of vocation.

Pope Francis stressed the importance of our attitude before the God who chose us and anointed us as servants. With the exception of Our Lady and Jesus, he said, we have all fallen and because of this, Peter's example should serve as an inspiration. When he denied Jesus, Peter cried and repented. This, the Pope continued is the path that we should follow: the path of a servant who asks for forgiveness when he or she falls. The other path, the one followed by Judas, is the path of the servant who is unable to understand that he has fallen, resulting in the heart being open to passions that lead to idolatry. At the end of his homily, the Holy Father invited the faithful to remember that our vocation is to serve and prayed that like Peter, we too may be able to weep when we slip and fall.



Wednesday, 8 April

For the conversion of those who exploit the needy

As he celebrated Mass on Holy Wednesday, 8 April, the Holy Father reflected on slavery. "Betrayal Wednesday" which recalls Judas selling the Master, makes us think of the slave trade from Africa to America, in which Judases sold their brothers and sisters and exploited them for work. These Judases still exist today, Pope Francis pointed out. They are those who traffic in human beings. However, Jesus said "you cannot serve God and money"; you cannot serve two masters, thus leaving us with two choices: "either serve God and you will be free in adoration and service, or serve money and you will be a slave to money".

Many people want to serve God and money which is impossible, the Pope said, and they become hidden exploiters, who appear socially flawless at the same time as they exploit their brothers and sisters. "Human exploitation is selling one's neighbour", the Pope warned.

The Pope then turned to the figure of Judas. Although the Lord called him to be a disciple, Judas was never able to have the

Monday, 13 April

For just solutions in the aftermath of the pandemic

The Holy Father began Holy Mass at Santa Marta on Easter Monday, 13 April, with a prayer that government leaders, scientists and politicians may find the right way to emerge from the aftermath of the pandemic with solutions that take into account the good of the people.

During the homily, he reflected on the day's Gospel of Matthew in which the Risen Lord exhorts some women to ask his disciples to go to Galilee to meet him. Meanwhile the priests who know that Jesus' body is missing, decide to bribe the soldiers so that they would say that the disciples had stolen the body. When we hide facts, the Pope explained, we serve the god of money as the priests tried to do in hiding the evidence and the truth of the resurrection. This, he stressed, is pure corruption.

The women in the Gospel, Pope Francis explained, present us with a human choice that still applies today. It is the choice between the joy and hope of Jesus' Resurrection and nostalgia for the tomb. We have this same choice today. In the time after this pan-

Wednesday, 15 April

For the elderly and the isolated

On Wednesday 15 April, during his homily for Holy Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis continued his reflection from the previous day on fidelity, and Mary Magdalene as the icon of fidelity. Our fidelity to God "is nothing more than a response to God's fidelity". In the day's first Reading a cripple person is healed in the name of Jesus. This, the Pope explained is an example of fidelity. God is capable "of redoing things, or re-creating ... a recreation that is more wonderful than creation", the Pope said. God's faithfulness is a like a free feast for us all, he added.

Like a good shepherd who never grows tired of seeking his lost sheep, God's divine faithfulness led him to seek Peter even after Peter had denied him during his Passion. Jesus appeared to him for the first time after the Resurrection because God's faithfulness, the Pope underlined, always precedes our own. Therefore, to be faithful, he explained, is to praise this fidelity and to be faithful to it, faithful to his promise. He "walks with his people, carrying out his promise close to his people".

Letter to the Faithful for the month of May

The beauty of praying the Rosary at home

In this time of social isolation due the pandemic "I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May". For the upcoming month of May, the Holy Father addressed a Letter to the many faithful throughout the world accompanied by two prayers to Our Lady. The Letter and the prayers were broadcast on Saturday, 25 April. The following is the English text of the Pope's letter and the two Marian prayers. The first prayer is the one the Pontiff addressed to Our Lady of Divine Love in a video message on the occasion of the Mass celebrated by Cardinal Vicar Angelo De Donatis on 11 March, Diocesan Day of Prayer and Fasting. The second Marian prayer is for this occasion.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home

within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in

my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020
Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist

Franciscus



Giovanni Battista Ramenghi,
"Our Lady of the Rosary with Saints" (1585)

Free us from this terrible pandemic

The Second Prayer

"We fly to your protection,
O Holy Mother of God".

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.



Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

Mary, sign of salvation and hope

First Prayer to Our Lady

O Mary, You shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith.

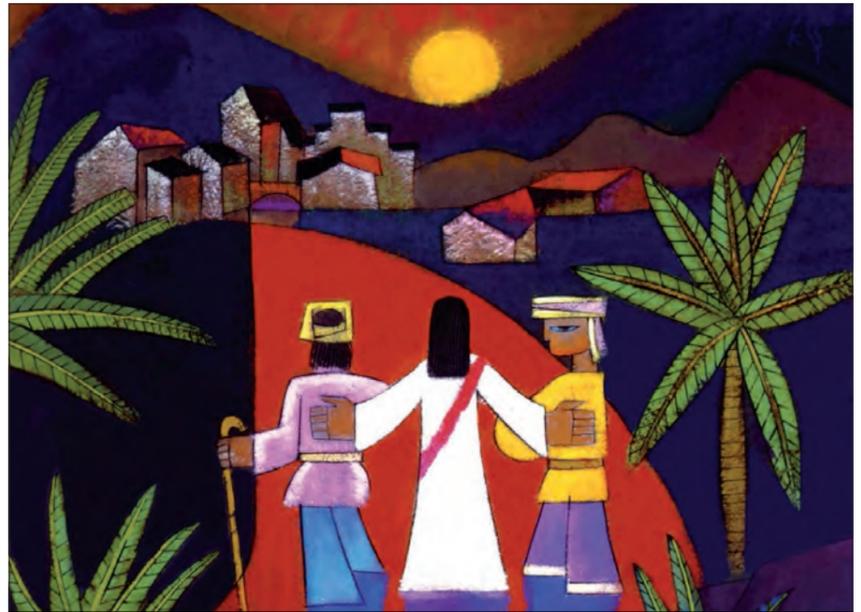
"Protectress of the Roman people", you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

REGINA CAELI

Pope Francis invited the faithful to embrace a turning point involving a shift from thoughts about 'I' to thoughts about the reality of God during the Regina Caeli on Sunday, 26 April. Commenting on the day's Gospel passage from Luke which tells of the disciples of Emmaus, he said we can do this at home by opening our heart to Jesus, listening to him and praying. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which he delivered in Italian from the library of the Apostolic Palace.



"On the road to Emmaus" by He Qi

The Pontiff talks about the disciples of Emmaus

Shifting thoughts from 'I' to God

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!

Today's Gospel, which takes place on the day of the Passover, describes the episode of the two disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). It is a story that begins and ends *on the move*. There is in fact, the outbound journey of the disciples who, saddened by the epilogue of Jesus' story, leave Jerusalem and return home to Emmaus, walking some 11 kilometres. It is a journey that takes place during the day, much of it downhill. And there is the return journey: another 11 kilometres, but at nightfall, partly an uphill journey after the fatigue of the outward journey and the entire day. Two trips: one easy in daytime, and the other tiring at night. Yet the first takes place in sadness, the second in joy. In the first one, there is the Lord walking beside them, but they do not recognise him; in the second one they do not see him anymore, but they feel him near them. In the first they are discouraged and hopeless; in the second they run to bring the good news of the encounter with the Risen Jesus to the others.

The two different paths of those first disciples tell us, Jesus' disciples today, that in life we have two opposite directions before us: there is the path of those who, like those two on the outbound journey, allow themselves to be paralysed by life's disappointments and proceed sadly; and there is the path of those who do not put themselves and their problems first, but rather Jesus who visits us, and the brothers who await his visit, that is, our brothers who are waiting for us to take care of them. Here is the turning point: to stop orbiting around one's self; the disappointments of the past, the unrealised ideals, the many bad things that have happened in our life. Very often we tend to keep

going around and around... To leave that behind and to go forward looking at the greatest and truest reality of life: *Jesus lives, Jesus loves me*. This is the greatest reality. And I can do something for others. It is a beautiful reality: positive, bright, beautiful! This is the turning point: to go from *thoughts about I* to the *reality of my God*; going – with another play on words – from "if" [*se* in Italian] to "yes" [*si* in Italian]. From "if" to "yes". What does this mean? "If he had freed us, if God had listened to me, if life had gone as I wanted, if I had this and that...", in a tone of complaint. This "if" is not helpful, it is not fruitful. It helps neither us nor others. Here are our "ifs", similar to those of the two disciples, whom however, move to a yes: "Yes, the Lord is alive, he walks with us. Yes, we continue our journey to announce it now, not tomorrow". "Yes, I can do this for the people so that they may be happier, so that people may better themselves, to help many people. Yes, yes I can". From "if" to "yes", from complaints to joy and peace, because when we complain, we are not joyful; we are in the grey, greyness, that grey air of sadness.

And this does not help nor allow us to grow well. From "if" to "yes"; from complaints to the joy of service.

How did this change of pace, from "I" to "God", from "if" to "yes", occur within the disciples? By *meeting* Jesus: the two disciples of Emmaus first open their hearts to him, then they listen to him explain the Scriptures and then they invite him home. These are three steps that we too can take in our homes: *first*, opening our hearts to Jesus, entrusting him with the burdens, the hardships, the disappointments of life, entrusting the "ifs" to him, and then, the *second* step, listening to Jesus, taking the Gospel in hand, reading this passage in chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel on this very day; *third*, praying to Jesus, in the same words as those disciples: "Lord, 'stay with us' (v. 29). Lord, stay with me. Lord, stay with all of us, because we need you to find the way". And without you, there is night.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are always journeying in life. And we become what we go towards. Let us choose the way of God, not of self; the way of "yes", not the way of "if". We will discover that there are no unexpected

events, no uphill path, no night that cannot be faced with Jesus. May Our Lady, Mother of the journey, who by receiving the Word made her entire life a "yes" to God, show us the way.

After praying the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday was United Nations World Malaria Day. While we are combatting the coronavirus pandemic, we must also continue our efforts to prevent and cure malaria, which threatens billions of people in many countries. I am close to all the sick, to those who care for them, and to those who work to ensure that every person has access to good basic healthcare.

I also address a greeting to all those in Poland who are participating today in the "National Scripture Reading Day". I have told you many times, and I would like to say once again, how important it is to get into the habit of reading the Gospel, for a few minutes, every day. Let us carry it in our pockets, in our bags. May it always be close to us, even physically, so that we read it a little every day. In a few days' time the month of May will begin, which is dedicated especially to the Virgin Mary. In a short Letter published yesterday, I invited all the faithful to pray the Holy Rosary this month, either with your families or on your own, and to recite one of the two prayers that I have made available to everyone. Our Mother will help us face this time of difficulty we are experiencing with greater faith and hope.

I wish you all a happy month of May, and a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci*.

