



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 21 January 2024

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

The Gospel today recounts the vocation of the first disciples (cf. *Mk* 1:14-20). Calling others to join his mission is one of the first things Jesus does at the beginning of his public life: He approaches some young fishermen and invites them to follow him to “become fishers of men” (v. 17). And this tells us something important: the Lord loves to involve us in his work of salvation. He wants us to be active with him. He wants us to be responsible and protagonists. A Christian who is not active, who is not responsible in the work of proclaiming the Lord and who is not a protagonist of his faith, is not a Christian or, as my grandmother used to say, is a “rosewater” Christian.

God does not need us per se, but he does so [involves us in his work of salvation] — despite the fact that it involves taking on many of our limitations: we are all limited, or rather sinners, and he takes this on. Let us look, for example, at how much patience he had with the disciples: they often did not understand his words (cf. *Lk* 9:51-56), at times they did not agree among themselves (cf. *Mk* 10:41), for a long time they were unable to accept some essential aspects of his preaching, such as service (cf. *Lk* 22:27). And yet, Jesus chose them and continued to believe in them. This is important: the Lord chose us to be Christians. And we are sinners — we do one thing after another — but the Lord continues to believe in us. This is wonderful.

Indeed for Jesus, bringing God’s salvation to everyone was his greatest joy, his mission and the meaning of his existence (cf. *Jn* 6:38), or, as he says, his food (cf. *Jn* 4:34). And light and joy

multiply with every word and deed in which we join with him in the beautiful adventure of giving love (cf. *Is* 9:2): not only *around* us, but also *in* us. To proclaim the Gospel, then, is not wasted time: it is being happier by helping others be happy; it is to free ourselves by helping others be free; it is becoming better by helping others be better!

Let us ask ourselves then: do I pause every now and then to remember the joy that grew in me and around me when I welcomed the calling to know and bear witness to Jesus? And when I pray, do I thank the Lord for having called me to make others happy? Finally, do I wish to make someone savour, through my testimony and my joy, to make them savour how beautiful it is to love Jesus?

May the Virgin Mary help us to taste the joy of the Gospel.

After praying the Angelus the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, the next few months will lead us to the opening of the Holy Door, with which we will begin the Jubilee. I ask you to intensify your prayers, in order to prepare ourselves to live this event of grace well, and to experience the strength of God's hope. Therefore, today we begin the *Year of Prayer*, that is, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, and in the world. We will also be helped in this by the resources that the Dicastery for Evangelization will provide.

In these days, let us pray especially for Christian unity, and let us never tire of invoking the Lord for peace in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and in many other parts of the world. It is always the weakest who suffer the lack of it. I am thinking of the little ones, of the many injured and killed children, of those deprived of affection, deprived of dreams and of a future. Let us feel the responsibility to pray and build peace for them!

I have learned with sorrow of the kidnapping, in Haiti, of a group of people, including six religious sisters. In my heartfelt plea for their release, I pray for social concord in the country, and I invite everyone to bring an end to the violence, which is causing a great deal of suffering to that dear population.

I greet all of you, who have come from Rome, Italy and from many parts of the world. In particular, the pilgrims from Poland, Albania and Colombia; the students of the Pedro Mercedes Institute of Cuenca, Spain; American university students who are studying in Florence; the group of Quinceañeras from Panama; and priests and migrants from Ecuador, to whom I assure my prayer for peace in their country. I greet the faithful of Massafra and Perugia, the Italian Catholic Union of Teachers, Managers, Educators and Trainers; and the Agesci Scout Group from Palmi.

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

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