
Pope Francis: audience, “a Christian attitude is to be attentive to the Lord visiting our lives”

“A Christian attitude is to be attentive to the Lord’s visits - the Lord comes to our lives, with an inspiration to be better”. The Pope made these off-the-cuff remarks at the catechesis of his general audience today, delivered in the Paul VI Hall and dedicated to old age and the example of Simeon and Anna. “Before leaving this world, their reason for life was waiting for God’s visit”, Pope Francis explained: “They were waiting for God, that is, Jesus to come and visit them. By premonition of the Holy Spirit, Simeon knew that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. Anna would go to the temple every day, her whole life was dedicated to serving in the temple. They both recognised the presence of the Lord in the child Jesus, who filled with consolation their long wait and with peace their earthly departure. This is a scene of encounter with Jesus and of farewell”. “The fidelity of waiting sharpens the senses”, the Pope remarked: “Indeed, we know that the Holy Spirit does just this: He enlightens the senses. The Spirit is capable of doing this: He sharpens the senses of the soul, despite our limitations and the deterioration of our physical senses. Old age somehow dulls our physical senses: we may become a little blind, or a little deaf... However, if in our old age we remain focused on waiting for God’s visit, then we will not miss His visit. Rather, we will be even more keen and ready to sense and welcome the Lord when He comes”. Then the Pope continued off the cuff, quoting Saint Augustine: “I am afraid of God when He passes by, I am afraid of letting Him pass by without realising it”. “It is the Holy Spirit who sharpens our senses and makes us understand when the Lord is visiting us, as He did with Simeon and Anna”, Pope Francis continued. “Today - he went on to say -, we need this more than ever: an old age filled with spiritual vitality and capable of recognising the signs of God, or rather, the Sign of God who is Jesus”. It is a sign that throws us into crisis – Jesus throws us into crisis, because He is a sign of contradiction – but also fills us with joy”. “A crisis does not necessarily lead to sadness: sometimes - he added - being in crisis can give us peace”.

Valentina Bombelli