
Pope Francis: "I'm much better, but I get tired if I speak too much"

"Today, too, I asked Monsignor Ciampanelli to read the text, because I still have some difficulties. I feel much better, but I get tired if I talk too much. So he will be the one to speak." **Pope Francis** entered Paul VI Hall with the help of his walking stick for today's general audience, which followed the same format as last Wednesday's audience, helped by Monsignor Filippo Ciampanelli from the Secretariat of State in the reading of the text. "And let us not forget to pray for all those who suffer the tragedy of war, especially the populations of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine," the Pope said in his final greetings to the Italian-speaking pilgrims: "War is always a defeat. No one wins, everyone loses. The only winners are the arms manufacturers." "In this age of ours, which does not help us have a religious outlook on life, and in which the proclamation has become in various places more difficult, arduous, apparently fruitless, the temptation to desist from pastoral service may arise", reads the Pope's text for the catechesis. "Perhaps one takes refuge in safety zones, like the habitual repetition of things one always does, or in the alluring calls of an intimist spirituality, or even in a misunderstood sense of the centrality of the liturgy", Francis writes:

"They are temptations that disguise themselves as fidelity to tradition, but often, rather than responses to the Spirit, they are reactions to personal dissatisfactions."

"Creativity" and "simplicity", are the two key words for pastoral care: "Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world." "The Spirit is the protagonist; he always precedes the missionaries and makes the fruit grow", the Pope said in the opening remarks of his catechesis: "This knowledge comforts us a great deal!", Francis exclaimed. He remarked: "in her apostolic zeal the Church does not announce herself, but a grace, a gift, and the Holy Spirit is precisely the Gift of God, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman."

"The primacy of the Spirit should not, however, induce us to indolence", Francis pointed out: "Confidence does not justify disengagement."

"The Lord has not left us theological lecture notes or a pastoral manual to apply, but the Holy Spirit who inspires the mission", Francis said: "And the courageous initiative that the Spirit instils in us leads us to imitate his style, which always has two characteristics: creativity and simplicity. Creativity, to proclaim Jesus with joy, to everyone and today", the final exhortation: "let us allow ourselves to be drawn by the Spirit and invoke him every day; may he be the source of our being and our work; may he be at the origin of every activity, encounter, meeting and proclamation. He enlivens and rejuvenates the Church: with him we must not fear, because he, who is harmony, always keeps creativity and simplicity together, inspires communion and sends out in mission, opens to diversity and leads back to unity. He is our strength, the breath of our proclamation, the source of apostolic zeal." "Let us defend the dignity of every human person, let us continue our fight against the throwaway culture." The Pope's words, in his closing remarks at the General Audience, were addressed to the Telethon Foundation in Mexico. In his greeting to the Polish faithful, the Pope expressed his appreciation to the artists taking part in the concert "Psalms of Peace and Thanksgiving" to commemorate the beatification of the Ulma family, and thanked "all those who support the Eastern Church with their prayers and offerings, especially in the tormented Ukraine." In his greetings to the Italian-speaking faithful, the Holy Father recalled the feast of the Immaculate Conception, when he will pay the traditional homage to the statue of the Immaculate Conception in Piazza di Spagna. This will be preceded by the presentation of the "Golden Rose" to the icon of the Salus populi romani in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major: "May you learn from her great faith in the

Lord, to become witnesses of goodness and evangelical love.”

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