
Pope at audience: “Prayer is the embankment against the tidal wave of evil”

Prayer is "the embankment, man's refuge that holds back the waves of wickedness spreading throughout the world", the Pope said in the catechesis of today's General Audience, livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace and dedicated to the "prayer of the righteous", "capable of writing a different destiny of mankind." *"God's plan for humanity is for the good, even though we experience the presence of evil in our everyday lives"* Francis said, guarding against the temptation of envy, ambition and revenge: "The Tempter is a wicked payer, he mispays", as evidenced in the story of Adam and Eve. The accounts of Cain and Abel, on the other hand, tell us that "the story of the first fraternity ends with a murder." Still today, "human fraternity" is what is lacking everywhere, and thus, "evil spreads like wildfire. Until it invades the whole picture." *"The great frescoes of the Great Flood and the Tower of Babel are a reminder of the need for a new beginning, and of a new creation, that reaches its fulfilment in Jesus Christ"*, the Pope said. "Yet, in the first pages of the Bible, is also written another story, less conspicuous, much humbler and devout, symbolizing the reward of hope", Francis added with reference to Genesis: *"Even when almost everyone acts in a heinous way, turning hate and conquest into the driving force of human affairs, there are people capable of praying to God with sincerity, capable of writing the destiny of mankind in a different way."* "Abel offers God a sacrifice of firstfruits", is the first example chosen by the Pope, and before Noah, God "refrains from his intention to obliterate the human race."

"We also pray to be liberated from ourselves."

from our ambitions, from our passions, Francis said. "These men who pray in the first pages of the Bible are peacemakers", since "prayer, when it is authentic, delivers us from violent instincts", in all religions. *"Prayer cultivates flowerbeds of rebirth in places where man's hatred was only capable of expanding the desert"*, the metaphor chosen by the Pope: "The power of God is the power of life, it leads to rebirth", and "the lordship of God flows through the chain of these men and women, often misunderstood or excluded in the world", the tribute to the prayer of the righteous: "They are a silent chain that rarely hits the headlines, and yet it is of great importance to restore confidence to the world!"

"Prayer is a chain of life, always. Prayer is a seed of life",

Francis added in unwritten remarks, remembering a government leader of the past, an atheist: "He had no religious sentiment in his heart, but as a child he heard his grandmother praying, and that remained in his heart. At a difficult moment in his life, that memory returned to his heart: 'My grandmother prayed!' And he began to pray as his grandmother prayed, and he found Jesus." "That's why it is so important to teach children to pray", Francis said, with an invitation to teach them to "do properly" the sign of the cross, which "is the first prayer", "a seed of life, a seed of dialogue with God" that remains in the heart, even when other paths have been undertaken. "Prayer opens the door to God because it transforms the human heart, which so many times is made of stone, into a human heart," concludes the Pope: "It requires abundant humanity, and with humanity we pray well."

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