
Pope Francis: to elderly and sick priests, “heal from the virus of self-sufficiency”

“It is beautiful to see the attention shown by pastors to those priests who are physically more fragile. Indeed, you are priests who, by your prayer, your listening, and by offering up your sufferings, exercise an important ministry in your Churches”. The Pope, said this in his message to the participants in the 6th Day for the Elderly and Sick Priests of Italy’s Lombardy region that is taking place at the Sanctuary of “Santa Maria del Fonte” in Caravaggio (Bergamo) today. Besides thanking the UNITALSI, the volunteers and the organisers of the meeting, Pope Francis also expressed special gratitude to his “brother priests” who live “in their old age or are facing a bitter illness”: “Thank you for your witness of faithful love to God and to the Church. Thanks for your silent proclamation of the Gospel of life. Thank you, for you are a living memory to draw from to build the future of the Church”. “Over the past few months, we have all experienced restrictions”, the Holy Father wrote: “The days spent in a limited space seemed endless and always the same. We felt the lack of affection from those dear to us and from our friends; the fear of contagion reminded us of our vulnerability. In a way, we got to experience what some of you, like many other elderly people, are living on a daily basis”. “I very much hope that this period will help us to understand that, much more than occupying space, it is necessary not to waste the time that is given to us”, the Pope remarked: “that it will help us to enjoy the beauty of the encounter with the other, to heal from the virus of self-sufficiency”. “Let us not forget this lesson!”, the Pope exhorted: “In the most difficult period, full of deafening silence and a distressing emptiness, many, almost spontaneously, raised their eyes to Heaven. With God’s grace, that can be a purifying experience. Let us not be afraid of suffering: the Lord carries the cross with us!”.

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