
Pope Francis: “We must never forget the time and the way in which God entered our lives”

From persecutor to apostle, a "striking contrast" was created in the life of St Paul, marked by the encounter with grace, "when God changed our existence." Human history and the testimony of the Letter to the Galatians, at the heart of **Pope Francis'** Catechesis for today's General Audience in the San Damaso courtyard, attest to the unfolding of a transformative process. The Pope focused his meditation on the theme: "Paul the true apostle". The Holy Father recalled that "at the heart of the diatribe is the question of circumcision", hence of "the main Jewish tradition", and that "Paul chooses to go deeper." *"He does not stop at the surface of the problems, of conflicts, as we are often tempted to do in order to find an immediate solution that deludes us into thinking that we can all agree with a compromise. Paul loves Jesus and knows that Jesus is not a man, a God of compromises."* It is therefore necessary "to reiterate the novelty of the Gospel, which the Galatians have received through his preaching, to build the true identity on which to base their existence." **The striking contrast.** Recounting the story of his conversion, Paul "thus highlights the truth of his vocation through the striking contrast that had been created in his life: from being a persecutor of Christians for not observing the traditions and the law, he was called to become an apostle to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ", Francis said. Thinking back on this story, "Paul is full of wonder and gratitude." The Pope went on to highlight the two extremes: "He had been brought up as a boy to be a blameless observer of the Mosaic Law." However, "something unexpected had happened: God, by His grace, had revealed to him His Son who had died and rose again, so that he could become a herald among the Gentiles." **The inscrutable ways of the Lord.** The Pope exclaimed: "How inscrutable are the ways of the Lord!", but especially "if we think back to the times when the Lord called us." Concluding his catechesis the Pontiff reminded the faithful to "never forget the time and the way in which God entered our lives," "let us keep fixed in our hearts and minds that encounter with grace, when God changed our existence." Francis thus addressed the question: "How is it possible that God uses a sinner, a frail and weak person, to do His will?" "And yet – the Pope replied - none of this happens by chance, because everything has been prepared in God's plan. He weaves our history and, if we correspond with trust to His plan of salvation, we realise it." The Holy Father reminded the faithful that "the calling always implies a mission to which we are destined." "That is why we are asked to prepare ourselves seriously, knowing that it is God Himself who sends us, it is God Himself who supports us with His grace." Finally, the invitation to "let us allow ourselves to be led by this awareness": *"the primacy of grace transforms existence and makes it worthy of being placed at the service of the Gospel. The primacy of grace covers all sins, changes hearts, changes lives, and makes us see new paths."* **The weeping of Our Lady of Klokočov and the value of summer.** In greeting the pilgrims gathered, Pope Francis addressed the participants in the Pilgrimage of Thanksgiving of the Eparchy of Košice, which celebrates the 350th anniversary of the miraculous weeping of the icon of Our Lady of Klokočov", led by their Ordinary Archbishop Cyril Vasi. "May this celebration of the Mother of God renew in your people the faith and the lively sense of her intercession on your journey", the Pope said. To all, the Pope expressed the wish "that the coming summer holidays may offer the opportunity to deepen each person's relationship with God and to follow Him more freely on the path of His commandments."