
Pope at audience: “In Lesbos to draw near to a humanity wounded in the persons of so many migrants”

“Tomorrow I will go to Cyprus and then to Greece to visit the dear populations of these countries that are rich in history, spirituality and civilization.” With these words the Pope concluded today's general audience in Paul VI Hall, dedicated to the person of Joseph, “just man and Mary’s betrothed spouse.” “It will be a journey to the sources of apostolic faith and of fraternity among Christians of various confessions”, Francis announced referring to his 35th international apostolic visit that will bring him to Cyprus and then to Greece starting tomorrow, until December 5.

“I will also have the opportunity to draw near to a humanity wounded in the persons of so many migrants in search of hope: I will visit Lesbos”,

Francis said, asking the faithful to accompany him with prayer. The Holy Father called on engaged couples “to witness to a love that has the courage to move from the logic of falling in love to that of mature love”, like the love between Mary and Joseph. **“How important it is for each one of us to cultivate a just life and, at the same time, to always feel the need for God’s help!”**, the Pope said to the faithful: “to broaden our horizons and to consider the circumstances of life from an always different, larger perspective.” “Many times, we feel imprisoned by what has happened to us”, Francis remarked: “But particularly in front of some circumstances in life that initially appear dramatic, a Providence is hidden that takes shape over time and illuminates the meaning even of the pain that has touched us.” In this respect, the story of Joseph is paradigmatic: when he learned that Mary was with child, “her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly”, the Pope reminded the faithful, in contrast to the ancient Law whereby a woman who bears a child out of wedlock was punishable with stoning. Francis commented:

“Our lives are very often not what we imagine them to be.

Especially in loving and affectionate relationships, it is difficult to move from the logic of falling in love to the logic of a mature love. We need to move from infatuation to mature love.” The role model to look up to is that of Mary and Joseph engaged to each other: “They had probably cultivated dreams and expectations regarding their life and their future. Out of the blue, God seems to have inserted himself into their lives and, even if at first it was difficult for them, both of them opened their hearts wide to the reality that was placed before them.” “The first phase is always marked by a certain enchantment that makes us live immersed in the imaginary that is often not based on reality and facts”, the Pope explained with regard to falling in love and its connection with mature love: “But precisely when falling in love with its expectations seems to come to an end, that is where true love begins or true love enters in there.” *In fact, “to love is not the pretension that the other person, or life, should correspond to our imagination.” Francis pointed out: “Rather, it means to choose in full freedom to take responsibility for one’s life as it comes.* This is why Joseph gives us an important lesson. He chooses Mary with his eyes open.”

“Christian engaged couples are called to witness to a love like this that has the courage to move from the logic of falling in love to that of mature love”,

the Holy Father’s guidance: “This is a demanding choice that instead of imprisoning life, can fortify love so that it endures when faced with the trials of time.” “Never finish the day end without making peace”, is Francis’ practical counsel to engaged couples and newlyweds: “Because the cold war the next day is very dangerous. Don’t let war begin the next day.”

M.Michela Nicolais