



A Newsletter from the Missions Office/Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States  
Catholic Diocese of Columbus, Ohio

## *Pope Francis at Angelus: 2020 a year to cultivate hope and peace*

### *To monthly mission donors: Thank you for your support!*

On behalf of His Excellency Robert J. Brennan, the Bishop of Columbus, and Very Rev. Father Andrew Small, OMI, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, I would like to thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and financial support for the missions.

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At the Angelus prayer on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Pope Francis urged us to live the year 2020 in gratitude for the blessing of God's love in Jesus Christ. He also apologized for losing his patience while greeting the faithful near the Nativity scene in Saint Peter's Square on December 31, 2019.

When he addressed the crowds gathered in Saint Peter's Square on Wednesday, at the start of the New Year, he said, "Last night we concluded the year 2019 by thanking God for the gift of time and all its benefits." He said. "Today, we begin the year 2020 with the same attitude and praise".

Pope Francis recalled the liturgical feast of Mary, the Mother of God and said that Mary blesses us by showing us her Son. "She blesses the whole Church; she blesses the whole world; Jesus, as

the Angels sang in Bethlehem, is 'the joy for all people'. He is the glory of God and peace for humanity." The Pope said.

Pope Francis said Jesus, the Savior, is God's blessing for every man and woman, because He defeated evil at its root.

"His salvation is not magical, but it is a 'patient' salvation, that is, it involves the patience of love, which takes on wickedness and removes its power. The patience of love: love makes us patient" the Pope said. "We often lose patience. So, I apologize for yesterday's bad example".

The apology Pope Francis offered was in connection with a moment from his visit to the Nativity scene in Saint Peter's Square on December 31. As he greeted the faithful, a woman tugged his arm, causing a shooting pain to which the Pope reacted with an impatient gesture to free himself from her grip.

The Pope said that Jesus reminds us that God loves us, even when we have lost our "self-esteem by remaining prisoners of vicious cycles".

According to Pope Francis, those who are victims of injustice and exploitation and see no way out, Jesus opens the door of fraternity where they can find welcoming faces, hearts and hands, where they can share bitterness and despair, and recover some dignity.

"Those who are seriously ill and feel abandoned should remember that Jesus is close to them and tenderly touches their wounds, turning weakness into "a force for good". Pope Francis said.

"Those who are imprisoned and are tempted to close on themselves", Pope Francis said, "Jesus opens a horizon of hope, starting with a small glimmer of light".

Pope Francis also recalled his message for the 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Peace, celebrated on New Year's Day.

"For 2020 the message is this: 'Peace as a journey of hope'; a journey in which progress is made through dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion."

In conclusion, Pope Francis invited us to "descend from the pedestals of our pride and ask for the blessing of the Holy Mother of God" who shows us that we are blessed in Jesus.

"Thus the year that begins will be a journey of hope and peace, not through words, but through daily gestures and dialogue, reconciliation and care for creation". The Pope said.

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*Lord, heal our blindness so that we can see ourselves, the world and others through the lens of Your own eyes.*

## ***God is a promise maker and a promise keeper!***

From the first chapter of Scripture, God emphasizes His dependability. When God spoke, something happened - without exception. By God's divine "fiat" there was light, land, beaches and creatures. God spoke and it happened.

God's word is sure. What He says happens. The same power is seen in Jesus Christ.

Why did Jesus applaud the Centurion whose servant was healed by Jesus?

Because the Centurion believed in the power of Jesus to keep His word.

The Centurion believed that God will not - and cannot - break His promise.

God is not only a promise maker. God is also a promise keeper.

Let us be what we were made to be; people of the promise. Let us build our lives on the promises of God.

## ***Laudato Si: On care for our common home***

Laudato Si is Pope Francis' appeal addressed to every person living in this planet. It is a call for an inclusive dialogue of how we are shaping the future of our planet.

Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges. He is asking everyone to join him in embarking on a new path.

In the "Praise be to you, my Lord", Saint Francis reminds us that the earth - our common home - is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

## ***A joke a priest can tell... LOL!***

Our Lord was worried because there have been too many arrivals in heaven. He complained to Saint Peter about the laxity of the process.

The Lord suggested that arrivals should undergo an entrance test. They were to be asked about their religion.

Saint Peter thought that it was an excellent idea. After thinking what would be the most critical question, he came up with the following: "What is the significance of Easter?"

Meeting with the first arrival, Saint Peter asked, "What is the significance of Easter?"

The first arrival answered, "It is a day we color eggs and children hunt them in the playground."

"You must go to hell". Saint Peter told him.

Saint Peter asked the second arrival, "What is the significance of Easter?"

The second arrival answered, "There is always an Easter bunny or a rabbit."

Saint Peter said, "You too, must go to hell."

The next in line overheard the first two dialogues. He was ready and sure of himself.

"And you," Saint Peter asked the third arrival, "What is the significance of Easter?"

The third arrival answered, "That is when Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day, He rose again."

"Praise God!" Saint Peter exclaimed. "Finally, there is one person worthy of heaven. What else can you say about Easter?"

Oozing with confidence after his correct answer he went on. "After Jesus rose from the dead and got

out from the cave, he went out chasing the bunny and hunting colored eggs in the playground".

Saint Peter collapsed!

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## ***Pope Francis' February Prayer Intention:***

**Listen to the Migrants' Cries -**  
We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

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## ***Did you know?***

- February comes from the Latin word "februa", which means to cleanse. The month was named after the Roman Februalia, which was a month-long festival of purification and atonement.
- February is the only month to have a length of fewer than 30 days - 29 days on leap years.
- January and February were the last months to be added to the Roman calendar, c.450 B.C. Originally, winter was considered a monthless period.
- Originally, February was made the last month of the calendar year. Eventually, February was moved to its place as the second month (c.450 B.C.)

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