



23rd Sunday Ordinary Time – 8th September 2024

POPE FRANCIS ON HIS TOUR OF ASIA AND OCEANIA



Pope Francis on Sept. 4 delivered a sharp warning that "distortion of religion" fuels extremism, intolerance and violence and urged Indonesia to double down on its long tradition of coexistence and social harmony during the first full day of his nearly two-week

tour of Asia and Oceania. "Prejudices can be eliminated and a climate of mutual respect and trust can grow," said the pope during his first address in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. "This is indispensable for meeting common challenges, including that of countering extremism and intolerance, which through the distortion of religion attempt to impose their views by using deception and violence." With a population of nearly 280 million – about 87% of whom are Muslims – the country's constitution guarantees freedom of religion and there is a longstanding government commitment to pluralism and diversity. But an uptick in religious restrictions as of late and the recent victory of President-elect Prabowo Subianto, who has a well-documented history of human rights abuses, has heightened concerns. The pope used his remarks at Indonesia's presidential palace, in the presence of current President Joko Widodo, to remind Indonesia – a country made up of thousands of tiny islands – that their diverse society represents a "magnificent mosaic" that can offer an example of social harmony, rather than division. "A harmony in diversity is achieved when particular perspectives take into account the needs common to all and when each ethnic group and religious denomination acts in a spirit of fraternity, pursuing the noble goal of serving the good of all," he told a crowd of some 300 government leaders and diplomats. "The awareness of participating in a shared history, in which solidarity is essential and contributions are made by all, helps to identify the right solutions, to avoid the exasperation of contrasts and to transform opposition into effective cooperation," the pontiff continued. While the pope praised Indonesia's constitution for its commitment to these values, he also said the government must match its "impressive declarations of policy" with a greater focus on social justice. Indonesia is now one of the world's fastest growing economies, yet there are still stark divides between the rich and poor. "A considerable part of humanity is left on the margins, without the means for a dignified existence and no defence against the serious and growing social imbalances that trigger acute conflicts," the pope said. Here in a city where towering skyscrapers are being rapidly built next to shantytowns, the pope returned to that same theme when he met in the afternoon at the city's cathedral with the country's Catholic bishops, priests, seminarians and consecrated women and men, and where he encouraged them to embrace compassion over self-interest. "What keeps the world going is not the calculations of self-interest, which generally end up destroying creation and dividing communities, but offering charity to others," he said. "It makes us see things better, in the light of love." Caring, the pope added, "is not communism."

*Courtesy Christopher White—Vatican Correspondent
National Catholic Reporter*

Remembered this Weekend

Maggie Graham
Teasie, Christie & Richard Dowling
Billy Graham & Dec Family
John Kelly
Margaret Francoise (6th A)
Thomas Swayne (2nd A)
Anne Shelley & George Shelley
John Keane (1st A)
Mary Lancaster (1st A)
Gerry, Patricia & Dermot Lancaster
Helma Baumgartner & Family

Celebrating his 60th birthday:
Colm Burke



Crosscare

The Annual Collection for Crosscare takes place next weekend.



Safeguarding Sunday

Safeguarding Sunday this year, falls on Sunday 22 September.



Helplines

If you have been affected by the recent revelations about abuse in religious schools there is help available. All of this help is provided by professionals in complete confidence.

Towards Healing: 1800-303-416
info@towardshealing.ie
www.towardshealing.ie

One in Four: 016624070
info@oneinfour.ie
www.oneinfour.ie

Connect: 1800-477-477
admin@connectcounselling.ie
www.connectcounselling.ie

Childline: 1800666666 (free ph)
www.childline.ie

Samaritans: 116123 (free phone)
jo@samaritans.ie

23RD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Penitential Rite

Our God is a God of hope and healing. As we begin our celebration let us call to mind God's goodness to us.

Your Word to us is hope. Lord have mercy

Your Word is healing and peace. Christ have mercy

Your Word to us is equality for all. Lord have mercy

May our healing God have mercy on us, forgive us our sin and bring peace to our lives. Amen

Isaiah 35:4-7

Say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid. 'Look, your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God; he is coming to save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy; for water gushes in the desert, streams in the wasteland, the scorched earth becomes a lake, the parched land springs of water.

James 2:1-5

My brothers and sisters, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a person comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor person comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed person, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats;' then you tell the poor person, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom and cured all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people. Alleluia

Mark 7:31-37

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it.

Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said, 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

Prayer of the Faithful

Loving Father, Son and Spirit, it is in and through your love that we find our true freedom. Praise and thanks to you. Lord hear us

Lord Jesus by healing the sick and those most in need you made the love of God flesh for us all. Praise and thanks to you. Lord hear us

Many in our society are struggling, including the homeless. May the coming budget be aimed especially at those in need and not simply be used for political gain. Lord hear us

We remember, with joy and thanksgiving, all those who have died. We pray for all who grieve their loss, that they may be comforted by the hope which is ours, as followers of Jesus. Lord hear us

At a time when there is a great deal of violence, war and hunger in our world, may we as Church, have the courage to speak for those most afflicted and to work for their liberation. Lord hear us

In quiet we call to mind, all who need our prayer and support Lord hear us



Reflection

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding. The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. You must be the change you wish to see in the world. But service can have no meaning unless one takes pleasure in it. When it is done for show or for fear of public opinion, it stunts the person and crushes their spirit. Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. Service rendered for its own sake is the noblest of all. Humankind becomes great exactly in the degree in which we work for the welfare of all people. A person who was completely innocent offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.

Mahatma Gandhi