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Editorial

The world is waiting with bated breath for what might be a sea of humanity descending on Rome for the double canonization, which will surely be a red-letter-day in the history of the Vatican. Both the Popes – John XXIII and John Paul II, who will be proclaimed saints have been popularly beloved, not just in their native Italy and Poland respectively, but literally all over the globe. 'Good' Pope John who is best known for having convened the Vatican Council II, with a purpose of promoting mercy, faith and the pastoral role of the church, ushered a wave of a new understanding of the Church in the modern world. Pope John Paul on the other hand is credited with contributing to the final collapse of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe. The crowds estimated for the canonization may be anywhere between five and seven million! May it also be a moment of grace for the Church, bringing to birth new life in the Spirit.

Responding to an invitation from Venezuela to participate in the country's peace talks, Pope Francis sent a letter to all parties involved, encouraging them to foster open dialogue. Pope Francis featured in the world news when he affirmed life on one occasion and apologized for clerical sexual abuse on another. While asking the scholars to do theology on the knees, he asked mayors to be true mediators! Everyone who was received in audience went home with something to ponder deeply in their hearts. But the copies of the Gospels distributed as gifts were the true icing on the cake. He encouraged the people to read it, and pay for it through a kind deed, a prayer... closing his eyes, hands on his chest, one in the audience next to me exclaimed, "this is indeed deeply touching...!"

Fr. Melwin Pinto, SJ

1. Pope asks Curia to find ways to implement 'Joy of Gospel' in its work

Pope Francis on Tuesday April 1, called together the heads of all Vatican offices to discuss how they could integrate into their work the teaching of his apostolic exhortation, "Evangelii Gaudium" Latin for "The Joy of the Gospel" A communiqué from Vatican's Press Office said the meeting, held inside the Apostolic Palace, lasted two and a half hours. Passionist Father Ciro Benedettini, vice director of the Vatican press office said the pope wanted the group to talk about how the papal document, which calls on Catholics to be living examples of joy, love and charity, "can influence the work of the Curia." Those attending the meeting discussed their "reflections and reactions" to the pope's apostolic exhortation and "the prospects that are open for its implementation," the Vatican said in a brief statement issued at the end of the discussion.



Pope Francis held a similar meeting last September when he called together top Vatican officials to hear their questions and suggestions about his ongoing reform of the Vatican bureaucracy. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, had said the September meeting lasted nearly three hours and, except for a brief greeting by the pope, was devoted to remarks by the other participants.



In "The Joy of the Gospel," released in November 2013, Pope Francis laid out his hopes for a truly missionary church, driven by "a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation."

The document was meant as a stimulus for Catholics, parishes, organizations and the church hierarchy itself to follow a path of deepening conversion and to recognize it "cannot leave things as they presently are. 'Mere administration' can no longer be enough," the pope wrote, and "excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the church's life and her missionary outreach."

In an effort to help the church and her ministers be more faithful to Jesus and his teachings, the pope invited everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.

2. Pope Francis to Salesians: Reach marginalized youth

Pope Francis on Monday March 31, met with members of the 27th General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco. The theme of the chapter is “Witnesses to the Radical Approach of the Gospel.” In his address, the Holy Father said the Holy Spirit would assist the religious institute to understand the expectations and challenges of our time, especially those of the young people whose formation is the basis of the congregation’s main apostolate.

[\(Video\)](#)

Pope Francis told the Salesians the evangelization of young people is closely connected with education, and he encouraged them in their efforts to respond to the current educational crisis, while always remembering the “Preventive System” of St. John Bosco, which is based on kindness and friendship with pupils.



He also spoke of the life of exclusion many young people face. “Think of the vast reality of unemployment, with all of the negative consequences,” said Pope Francis. “Think of the addictions, which sadly are manifold, but

stem from a common root of an absence of true love. Reaching marginalized youth requires courage, maturity and much prayer.”



He urged the Salesians to use “careful discernment” when sending people to the peripheries inhabited by these excluded youth. The Holy Father also encouraged the community life of the Salesians, which he said supports their entire apostolate. “The humanizing power of the Gospel is demonstrated by the fraternity lived in community, comprised of welcome, respect, mutual help, understanding, kindness, forgiveness and joy,” said the Pope. “The familial spirit bequeathed by Don Bosco is a great help in this respect, encouraging perseverance and building an attraction to the consecrated life.”

During their General Chapter, the Salesians elected Don Angel Fernandez Artime as the 10th Rector Major, commonly referred to as the successor of Saint John Bosco.

3. Pope distributes free copies of Gospels

Pope Francis handed out free pocket-sized copies of the gospels to crowds filling St. Peter's square for the April 6, Sunday Angelus, as an encouragement to read the Word of God. [\(Video\)](#)



“Last Sunday I suggested that you get a little copies of the gospels, to carry with you during the day, to read often. Then I thought over the ancient tradition of the Church, during Lent, to give the gospel to catechumens preparing for baptism. So today I want to offer to you who are here in the piazza - but as a sign for all - a pocket-sized gospel. They will be distributed to you freely,” the Pope explained.

“Take one, carry it with you: it is truly Jesus who speaks to you,” he urged those packed into the square. “This is the word of Jesus!” The Holy Father then asked that the faithful remember Christ's words, “freely have you received, freely give!” so that they too would “give the message of the gospel” to others.

Pope Francis acknowledged that some may be skeptical of a free gift, asking “how much does it cost? How much must I pay, father?” “But let's do something,” he suggested. “In exchange for this gift, do an act of charity, a free gesture of love for another: a prayer for a friend, a reconciliation, something.”

Pope Francis concluded the Angelus by greeting the various pilgrim groups who were present in St. Peter's square, and reminded everyone to read the gospels. Whether in a book or on a smartphone or tablet, said the Pope, “the important thing is to read the word of God, with all means, but read the word - it's Jesus who speaks there! And welcome it with an open heart. So the good seed bears fruit!”



4. Pope Francis: Human life sacred and inviolable



Pope Francis reiterated human life is sacred and inviolable during a meeting with Italy's Pro-Life Movement (Movimento per la Vita) on Friday, April 11, adding every civil right is based on the “first and most fundamental right,” the right to life: which is not subordinate to any condition, neither qualitative, nor economic, much less ideological. [\(Video\)](#)

The Holy Father said one of the most serious risks of the present age is the divorce between economics and morality, so that as the market gives us every technical innovation, it neglects more and more elementary ethical standards.

“It is must be therefore reiterated the strongest opposition to any direct attack on life, especially innocent and defenseless life, and the unborn child in the womb is the most concrete example of innocence,” said Pope Francis. “Let us remember the words of the Second Vatican Council: From the moment of its conception, life must be guarded with the greatest care while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes.” (Gaudium et Spes, 51).

Pope Francis said for a Christian, it is a part of the witness of the Gospel to protect life with courage and love in all its stages. “I encourage you to always act with a style of nearness, of closeness: that every woman feels regarded as a person who is heard, accepted, and accompanied,” he said.

Pope Francis also showed gratitude for two specific activities of the Pro-Life Movement: The “Gemma Project”, which works with woman facing crisis pregnancies; and the “One of Us” Campaign, which is a European Union Citizens’ Initiative requesting the prohibition of EU financing of activities which involve the destruction of human embryos, especially in the areas of research, development cooperation and public health.

5. Pope Francis on clerical sexual abuse: Not one step back



“I feel compelled to personally take on all the evil which some priests, quite a few in number, obviously not compared to the number of all the priests, to personally ask for forgiveness for the damage they have done for having sexually abused children. [\(Video\)](#)

The Church is aware of this damage, it is personal, moral damage carried out by men of the Church, and we will not take one step backward with regards to how we will deal with this problem, and the sanctions that must be imposed. On the contrary, we have to be even stronger. ..Because you cannot interfere with children”. This was Pope Francis' clear message to members of BICE [International Catholic Child Bureau] whom he received Friday in audience at the Vatican.

BICE is a Catholic NGO that works to protect the rights and dignity of the child worldwide. Speaking to them, Pope Francis also spoke about the need to reaffirm the rights of parents to decide “the moral and religious education of their children” and reject all forms of “educational experimentation with children and young people”.

He said that it is every child’s right to grow up in a family “with a father and a mother” capable of creating “a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity”. The Pope also called for an end to



what he termed as “educational experiments” with children and young people, pushing a “dictatorship of one form of thinking” on them in the name of a pretended “modernity”.



The Pope noted that the “horrors of the manipulation of education that we experienced in the great genocidal dictatorships of the twentieth century have not disappeared; they have retained a current relevance under various guises and proposals”.

To counter this he urged the BICE members to foster a true anthropological formation of the child respectful of the reality of the person, to enable children and young people to respond to the problems and challenges posed by contemporary

culture and widespread mentality propagated by the mass media.

Below please find a Vatican Radio translation of the Holy Father’s address to participants:

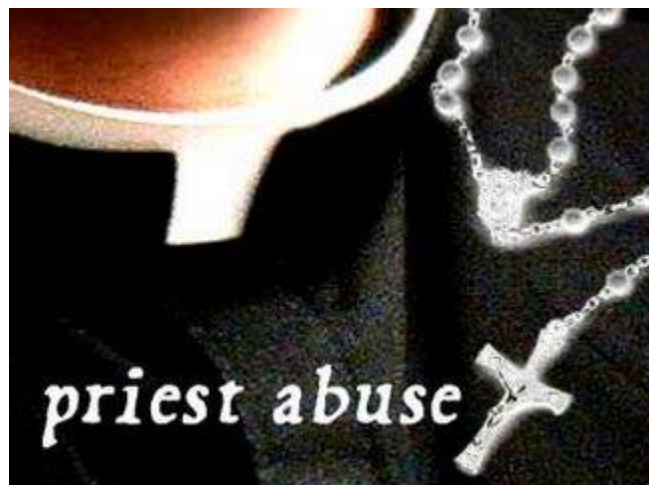
Dear friends,

I thank you for this meeting. I appreciate your efforts on behalf of children: it is a concrete and current expression of the predilection that the Lord Jesus has for them.

We can say that the BICE was born of the motherhood of the Church. In fact, it originates from Pope Pius XII intervention in defense of children in the aftermath of World War II. Since then, this organization has always been committed to promoting the protection of children's rights, and to contributing to the 1989 UN Convention. And in this his work it constantly collaborates with the Holy See offices of the in New York, in Strasbourg and especially Geneva.

[moving away from script speech].... I feel compelled to personally take on all the evil which some priests, quite a few in number, obviously not compared to the number of all the priests, to personally ask for forgiveness for the damage they have done for having sexually abused children. The Church is aware of this damage, it is personal, moral damage carried out by men of the Church, and we will not take one step backward with regards to how we will deal with this problem, and the sanctions that must be imposed. On the contrary, we have to be even stronger. Because you cannot interfere with children...

In our days, it is important to carry out the projects against slave - labor, against the recruitment of child soldiers and all



forms of violence against children. On a positive note, we must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child's development and emotional maturity.



At the same time, this implies supporting the right of parents to decide the moral and religious education of their children. And in this regard I would like to express my rejection of any kind of educational experimentation with children. We cannot experiment with children and young people. The horrors of the manipulation of education that we experienced in the great genocidal dictatorships of the twentieth century have not disappeared; they have retained a current relevance under various guises and proposals and, with the pretense of modernity, push children and young people to walk on the dictatorial path of "only one form of thought".

[moving away from script speech] "A week ago a great teacher said to me... 'with these education projects I don't know if we're sending the kids to school or a re-education camp'..."

Working for human rights presupposes the aim of fostering anthropological formation, of being well prepared on the reality of the human person, and knowing how to respond to the problems and challenges posed by contemporary culture and widespread mentality propagated by the mass media.

[moving away from script speech] Obviously this does not mean we should cover them with forms of protection that are superseded today because they belong to a past culture...Not this, this is no good...we should propose the positive values of the human person the new culture...

For you, this means offering your managers and operators continuing formation on the anthropology of the child, because that is where the rights and obligations have their foundation . It is upon this that the formation of educational projects rest.

[moving away from script speech] These projects obviously must progress, mature and accommodate itself to the signs of the times always remember human identity and freedom of conscience... Thank you again. I wish you a 'Buon lavoro'!

6. Pope warns theologians against narcissism, an ecclesiastical illness

"The theologian who does not pray and who does not worship God ends up sunk in the most disgusting narcissism. And this is an ecclesiastical illness. The narcissism of theologians, of thinkers, and of the 'just' does so much harm," said Pope Francis on Thursday April 10, while addressing the professors, students, and staff of the Pontifical Gregorian University and to the associated Pontifical Biblical Institute and Pontifical Oriental Institute. [\(Video\)](#)

Speaking about relationship between study and the spiritual life, he said "Philosophy and theology permit one to acquire the convictions that structure and strengthen the intelligence and illuminate the will ... but this is fruitful only if it is done with an open mind and on one's knees.

Further, he said “The purpose of the studies in every Pontifical University is ecclesial. Research and studies are integrated with personal and community life, with missionary commitment, with fraternal charity and sharing with the poor, with care of the interior life in relationship with the Lord. Your institutes are not machines for producing theologians and philosophers; they are communities in which one grows, and that growing occurs in the university which is a family.”

Here below the text of his address,

I welcome all of you, professors, students, and staff of the Pontifical Gregorian University, of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and of the Pontifical Oriental Institute. I greet Father Nicolás, the father delegate, and all the other superiors, as well as the Cardinals and Bishops present. Thank you!



The Institutions to which you belong — joined in a Consortium by Pope Pius XI in 1928 — are entrusted to the Society of Jesus, and share the same desire “to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross ... and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, His spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth” (Formula, 1). It is important that among them collaboration and synergy be developed, keeping the historic memory and at the same time taking charge of the present and looking to the future — the father general said, looking to the future, “But it’s far away, eh? [Look] to the horizons” — looking to the future with creativity and

imagination, seeking to have a global vision of the situations and real challenges and a shared manner of confronting them, finding new paths.



The first aspect that **I want to emphasize, thinking of your commitment**, both as teachers and as students, both personally and institutionally, is that of appreciating the very place in which you find yourself working and studying, that is, the city and above all the Church of Rome. **Here there is a past and there is a present.** Here are the roots of faith: the memories of the Apostles and of the Martyrs; and here is the ecclesial “today,” here is the

actual path of this Church which presides in charity, at the service of unity and universality. All of this should not be taken for granted! It must be lived and appreciated, with a commitment that is partly institutional and partly personal, left to the initiative of each one.

But at the same time you bring the variety of your home Churches, of your own cultures. This is an inestimable richness of the Roman institutions. It offers a precious occasion of growing in the faith and of opening the mind and the heart to the horizons of catholicity. Within these horizons the dialectic between the “centre” and the “peripheries” assumes its proper form, **the evangelical form, according to the logic of a God that reaches from the centre coming from the peripheries in order to return to the peripheries.**



The other aspect that I want to share is that of **the relationship between study and the spiritual life.** Your spiritual commitment, in teaching and in research, in study and in deeper formation, will be all the more fertile and efficacious as it is more fully animated by the love of Christ and of the Church, as the relationship between study and prayer is more solid and harmonious. This is not something out-dated, this is the centre, eh?

This is one of the challenges of our time: transmitting the knowledge and offering a key for vital comprehension, not a heap of notions unconnected to one another. There is need of a true evangelical hermeneutic for better understanding life, the world, humanity, not of a synthesis but of a spiritual atmosphere of research and certainty based on the truths of reason and of faith. Philosophy and theology permit one to

acquire the convictions that structure and strengthen the intelligence and illuminate the will ... but this is **fruitful only if it is done with an open mind and on one’s knees. With an open mind and on one’s knees. The theologian who is satisfied with his complete and conclusive thought is mediocre.** The good theologian and philosopher has an open, that is, an incomplete, thought, always open to the maius of God and of the truth, always in development, according to the law that St. Vincent of Lerins describes as follows: “annis consolidetur, dilatetur tempore sublimetur aetate” (Commonitorium primum, 23 : PL 50, 668), [a thought that] is consolidated over the years, expands over time, deepens with age. This is the theologian who has an open mind. **And the theologian who does not pray and who does not worship God ends up sunk in the most disgusting narcissism. And this is an ecclesiastical illness.** The narcissism of theologians, of thinkers, and of the “just” does so much harm.

The purpose of the studies in every Pontifical University is ecclesial. Research and studies are integrated with personal and community life, with missionary commitment, with fraternal charity and sharing with the poor, with care of the interior life in relationship with the Lord. **Your institutes are not machines for producing theologians and philosophers; they are communities in which one grows, and that growing occurs in the family.** In the university



family there is the charism of governance, entrusted to the superiors, and there is the diaconia of the staff, which is indispensable for creating the familiar environment in everyday life, and also for creating the attitude of humanity and of concrete wisdom, that will make the students of today persons capable of building humanity, of transmitting the truth in a human dimension, of understanding that if one lacks the goodness and the beauty of belonging to a family of work one ends up being an intellectual without talent, and ethicist without goodness, **a thinker lacking in the splendour of beauty and only “wearing the mask”** (It: “truccato,” “made-up”) **of formalism**. The daily, respectful contact with the hard work and witness and the witness of the men and women who work in your Institutions will give you that dose of realism that is so necessary so that your knowledge will be a human knowledge and not a laboratory [knowledge].

Dear brothers, I entrust each of you, your studies and your work, to the intercession of Mary, Sedes Sapientiae, of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and of your other Patron Saints. I bless you from the heart, and I pray for you. And you, please, pray for me too! Thank you!

7. Pope encourages Venezuelan peace-talks while leaders seek Vatican mediation



Pope Francis is urging Venezuelans on both sides to put aside their political differences and demonstrate the necessary courage to reach an agreement that avoids more bloodshed after weeks of violent protests. Meanwhile the Venezuelan Government leaders have invited Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, to be a "witness in good faith" in the Peace talks between the Government and an opposition coalition. Opposition group Table for Democratic Unity, better known as MUD, had requested Cardinal Parolin's attendance as a neutral mediator, to insure fair play in the peace talks, which started on Thursday April 10. [\(Video\)](#)

The Pope's written message was read by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Aldo Giordano, at the start of a much-anticipated meeting Thursday night between President Nicolas Maduro

(pictured right) and key members of the opposition. The Argentine Pontiff said the polarization that besets Venezuela is inflicting deep pain on the country, complicating efforts to bring down crime and resolve economic problems that worry everyone regardless of their political views. "I'm aware of the restlessness and pain felt by so many people," Archbishop Giordano read the Pope's message. "I urge you not to get stuck in the conflict of the moment but open yourselves to one another to become true builders of peace."

Thursday's talks, which were televised, are first major effort at reconciliation since anti-government protests began to roil Venezuelan cities in early February. Key leaders of the opposition, including two-time presidential candidate



Henrique Capriles, agreed to sit down with Maduro after receiving assurances that the socialist government is willing to discuss divisive issues such as an amnesty for jailed government opponents and the



creation of an independent truth commission to investigate who's to blame for at least 40 deaths tied to the unrest. government for destroying the oil-rich economy and stamping out dissent, Maduro claims radical opponents, backed by the U.S., are trying to repeat the destabilizing events that led to the 2002 coup that briefly removed Chavez from power.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela in 2009. He's well known and respected throughout the country. So much so, the Venezuelan Government also seeks his mediation. Foreign Minister Elias Jaua has sent a formal letter asking for him to help in the process of important constructive dialogue.



Three Foreign Ministers from UNASUR- the Union of South American Nations, will also act as neutral mediators. They're from Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador.



The ongoing protests started two months ago, about spiralling 56 percent inflation, shortages of basic everyday commodities, a breakdown of law and order and crumbling infrastructure. Since then 39 people have died, more than 600 have been injured, hundreds more have been arrested, and the room for manoeuvre has been alarmingly shrinking. With these talks that could change.

The Vatican spokesman, Fr. Federico Lombardi, said Friday the Holy See and Parolin were "certainly willing and desirous to do whatever is possible for the good and serenity of the country." He said Parolin, *(Pictured left)* in particular, "knows and loves" Venezuela. But he said the Vatican needed to have more information to understand "the expectations and the premise for undertaking a useful role that could achieve the desired

8. Pope to celebrate Holy Thursday Mass at Centre for disabled



Pope Francis will celebrate Holy Thursday Mass at a rehabilitation Centre for the disabled, the Vatican announced on Tuesday, April 9. The centre for the disabled is run by the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation in Rome. Known as the St. Mary of Providence Centre, it has 150 beds for patients suffering from disabilities or requiring rehabilitation because of neuro-motor impairments. Last year, Pope Francis celebrated the Holy Thursday Mass at a Rome prison for juvenile offenders, where he washed the feet of young male and female inmates. [\(Video\)](#)

sacraments in the Diocese of Rome.

Pope Francis will hold the Holy Thursday morning chrisem Mass at St. Peter's Basilica as is customary and bless the oils used for

9. Pope in Korea: Motto and Logo for Papal trip presented

“Arise! Shine, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you” (Is, 60:1): this is the motto for Pope Francis’ upcoming Apostolic Voyage to Korea (14 to 18 August 2014), the first Papal trip to the nation since Blessed John Paul II’s visit 25 years ago.



The motto and logo were presented to the Vatican by a delegation from the Korean Bishop’s Conference organizing committee who are in Rome last week to finalize the latest details of events. The group is led by Fr. Chung Ui-chul and Fr. Hur Young- Yup, respectively in charge of Liturgical Celebrations and Public Relations for the papal visit. The official logo for the event is two intertwining flames, one blue and the other red, which rise from two waves that represent a boat . The colors indicate the two Koreas and the intertwining of the flames aims to emphasize a desire for the reunification of the two nations. The blue waves that form the boat are shaped like knife blades, a sign of the sacrifice of the martyrs of the Korean Church . The blue stands for God’s mercy which is as great as the ocean.

Pope Francis is travelling to South Korea for two main purposes. Firstly for the 6th Asian Youth Day (AYD), August 13-17, which is taking place in the diocese of Daejeon and will gather young Christians together from across the continent under the motto “Asian Youth! Wake up! The glory of the martyrs shines upon you”.

The AYD motto also points to the second purpose of Pope Francis visit: the beatification of 124 Korean martyrs. These are Paul Yun Ji-chung, the first Korean martyr, and 123 companions who were executed between 1791 and 1888 for the Faith by the Joseon Dynasty. 30 years ago, Pope John Paul II visited Korea for the canonization ceremony of 103 Korean martyrs including Andrew Kim Tae-gon, the first Korean native priest.

Asia is home to the world’s fastest growing Catholic community, more than doubling in numbers in the last century, despite remaining an overall religious minority. In Korea, Catholicism has grown by an estimated 70% over the past decade - numbering more than five million faithful - about ten percent of the national population.

10. Pope decides Vatican bank will remain operative

Pope Francis has approved recommendations for the future of the Vatican bank, saying it will continue operating, the Vatican said on Monday, April 7. The bank, officially called Institute for Works of Religion (IOR), has been beset by a series of scandals in past decades, including allegations of money-laundering, generating speculation whether the pontiff would close the institution. [\(Video\)](#)



The bank's stated purpose is to manage funds for the Church's religious orders, charitable institutions and Vatican employees and retirees. "The IOR will continue to serve with prudence and provide specialized financial services to the Catholic Church worldwide," a statement said. Pope Francis had approved a proposal on the future of the IOR presented by various commissions and by Australian Cardinal George Pell, head of a new Vatican department known as the Secretariat for the Economy. The Vatican said a "plan to ensure that the IOR can fulfil its mission as part of the new financial structures of Holy See" will be drawn up for the Pope, who has stressed that the

bank be transparent.

As before, the activities of the IOR will continue to fall under the regulatory supervision of AIF (Autorità di Informazione Finanziaria), the Holy See's and Vatican's own internal regulatory watchdog. In the past year under the leadership of its German president, Ernst von Freyberg, the IOR has closed hundreds of accounts, instituted strict anti-money laundering regulations and launched several investigations into suspicious activities.

11. Pope Francis: Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity

Pope Francis has condemned human trafficking, calling it a crime against humanity, a scourge and an open wound in contemporary society. His strong words came in an address to participants at a Conference on Combating Human Trafficking that took place in the Vatican from April 9-10th. Just before his address to the participants, the Pope held a private meeting with four victims of human trafficking, now rescued, who came from Chile, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Argentina. [\(Video\)](#)



The conference was organized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales and was attended by police chiefs from around 20 countries, trafficking victims who've been rescued and religious and lay organizations who are involved in

the battle against trafficking and reaching out to its victims.

In his address to the participants, the Pope said “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity. The very fact of our being here to combine our efforts means that we want our strategies and areas of expertise to be accompanied and reinforced by the mercy of the Gospel, by closeness to the men and women who are victims of this crime.”

“Our meeting today includes law enforcement authorities, who are primarily responsible for combating this tragic reality by a vigorous application of the law. It also includes humanitarian and social workers, whose task it is to provide victims with welcome, human warmth and the possibility of building a new life. These are two different approaches, but they can and must go together. To dialogue and exchange views on the basis of these two complementary approaches is quite important. Conferences such as this are extremely helpful, and, I would say, much needed.”

“I believe that one important sign of this is the fact that, one year after your first meeting, you have regrouped from throughout the world in order to advance your common efforts. I thank you for your readiness to work together. I pray that our Lord will assist you and that Our Lady will watch over you.”

One of the main organizers of the conference was Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, the president of the Bishops Conference in England and Wales. He spoke to Susy Hodges of Vatican Radio about the outcome of their discussions.



Cardinal Nichols said the Catholic Church in London is hoping to set up a sanctuary and recovery centre for victims of human trafficking after their rescue that will be named after Saint Josephine Bakhita. (She was a Sudanese-born slave who after she was eventually freed became a Canossian religious sister in Italy. She was canonized in 2000.) Cardinal

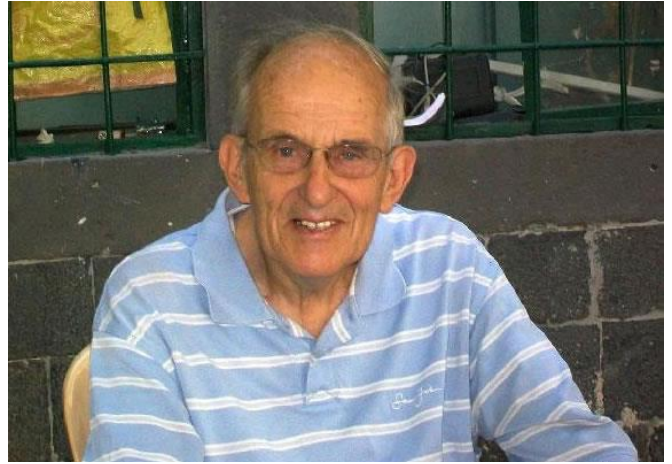
Nichols said they are trying to raise funds for this planned centre with the help of the local Caritas network.

He described the conference against trafficking as “a global look at a global problem” and said there are four stages for trying to tackle this scourge which were used as guidelines: “Being aware, being committed, being compassionate and being cooperative.” Asked what for him was the most shocking aspect of what the victims of human trafficking have to endure, the Cardinal replied: “the utter sense of darkness” in which the victims live and “the depth of empathy” they have for all the other victims still being held as slaves.

Cardinal Nichols said everybody at the conference was “absolutely thrilled” by Pope Francis’ strong words against the crime of human trafficking and by agreeing to meet the participants. He praised the Pope’s “determination and passion for leading the world on this matter.”

12. Fellow Jesuit's brutal murder in Syria mourned by Pope

Pope Francis publicly mourned the “brutal murder” of his Jesuit confrere Fr. Frans van der Lugt, a 75 year old Dutch priest living among and assisting the war-torn population of Homs, Syria. On Monday April 7, Fr. Frans was lured outside the Jesuit residence in Homs by an unidentified assailant who beat him and then shot him twice in the head. [\(Video\)](#)



Speaking at Wednesday's General Audience in Rome, the Pope appealed for an end to the conflict and spoke of his “profound pain” on hearing the news of Fr. Frans' killing, and the on-going trials of “the many people who suffer and die in that tortured country, my beloved Syria.”

Syria was beloved also to Fr. Frans, who had lived there since the 1970s, offering spiritual and psychological support especially to young people in Damascus and later in Homs, where he and a small group of other Jesuits run a center for the disabled.

Jesuit Fr. Samir Khalil Samir who runs the Beirut, Lebanon center for academic dialogue between Arab Christians and Muslims, CEDRAC (Center for Documentation and Research on Arab Christianity) was a friend of Fr. Frans. He says even though Fr. Frans knew he would probably be killed because he was a Christian and a foreigner, he was determined to stay in Homs to help his beleaguered people. Fr. Samir notes that over the last three years of conflict between government forces and opposition rebels, Fr. Frans, refused to leave them “even for one day.”



"He was totally dedicated to helping people," says Fr. Samir. "He's probably the only one who didn't leave the house, our residence in Homs, not for even one day. He decided to remain, day and night there in the Jesuit residence receiving people the whole day. Anyone who needed to be helped, knew that he would find help (through) Fr. Frans. Help meant to give him to eat, to sleep... any kind of help. The house was open to everyone, Christians and Muslims. He refused to make any distinction between (them). That's a very important point – no difference between Christians and Muslims. A person is a person and needs help, and that's all.”

13. Pope to Italian mayors: be mediators, not intermediaries



Pope Francis received in audience the members of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) on Saturday, April 5, whose president is the mayor of Turin, Piero Fassino. In his address, the Holy Father mentioned Cardinal Michel Pellegrino, archbishop of the city from 1965 and 1977 who, he revealed, helped the Bergoglio family find work in the post-war period. [\(Video\)](#)

“His gesture was a beautiful one”, said the Pope, addressing the president of the ANCI. “It recalls these men of the Church, these man and women of the Church – priests, nuns, laypeople – who knew how to walk alongside their people, within and next to their people. And the identity of the mayor is a little like this. ... The mayor is surrounded by the people. It is inconceivable that a mayor is not there, because the mayor is a mediator, in the midst of the needs of the people. **And the danger is that of becoming a mayor who is not a mediator, but rather an intermediary**”.

The difference between one and the other, Pope Francis explained, is that **“the intermediary exploits the needs of the various acts and takes a part for himself. ... Instead, the mediator, is one who gives his life for the unity and the needs of his people, to help them along**. After a period of time dedicated to the work of a mayor, these men or women tire and need to rest a little, but nevertheless their hearts are full of love because they have acted as mediators. And this is what I wish for you: that you will be mediators. In the midst of your people, to create unity, to make peace, to resolve problems and to answer to the needs of the people”.

“I think of Jesus: **he was not a mayor, but perhaps the image is useful to us**. I think of Jesus in a moment of his life, when he was in the midst of the crowds: the crowd pushed him, the Gospel tells us, almost to the point of not being able to breathe. And this is how the mayor should be, with his people, with him, with her, because this means that the people seek him because he knows how to answer, as they did with Jesus. This is what I wish for you. Tiredness, in the midst of the people, and that the people seek you because they know that you always know how to respond well to them”.

14. Pope ushers in Holy Week with Palm Sunday



Pope Francis ushered in Holy Week for Christians, celebrating Palm Sunday Mass in Rome's Peter's Square for an estimated 100,000 faithful from around the world. Setting aside his prepared text altogether, Pope Francis delivered an impromptu homily urging the faithful to think and find out what role they are playing from among the numerous characters and groups in the long narrative of the Lord's passion from Matthew's Gospel, starting from preparation for the Last Supper to the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus. [\(Video\)](#)

During this week, he said, “We would do well to ask just

one question: **who am I? Who am I, before my Lord? Who am I, who enters into Jerusalem in celebration? Am I able to express my joy, to praise Him? Or do I keep distant? Who am I, before Jesus Who suffers?"** The Holy Father recalled the characters and people such as Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, the holy women including Jesus' Mother, Joseph of Arimathea, his disciples and Judas and ask oneself : "Where is my heart? Which of these people do I resemble most? Am I like Judas, who pretends to love and kisses the master to hand him over, to betray him? Am I a traitor?" he reflected. Or am I like Pilate, who refuses to assume responsibility washing his hands when the situation gets tough?

On Palm Sunday, the Catholic Church also marks World Youth Day (WYD) at the diocesan level. It is celebrated in an international way every two to three years in a venue chosen by the Pope. Last July, the Pope celebrated it Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and next one is scheduled for 2016 in Krakow, Poland. In his 'Angelus', after the communion service on Palm Sunday, Pope Francis reminded all about the theme of Krakow meet: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Mt 5,7). He recalled how 30 years ago John Paul II entrusted the WYD Cross to the youth, exhorting them to "carry it through all the world as a sign of Christ's love for humanity." At this point, a WYD delegation from Brazil handed to its counterpart from Poland the WYD Cross, which had stood in Saint Peter's Square throughout the Mass. Pope Francis also recalled the young people of Asia, saying he was going to meet them at the Asian Youth Day in Daejeon, South Korea, on August 15. [\(Video\)](#)



At the end of the Mass the Pope went on his popemobile greeting the crowd, and at a certain point hopped off to pose for "selfies" with young people from Rio de Janeiro. He also sipped tea passed to him from the crowd.

Pope Francis has a busy schedule this Holy Week with the Easter triduum. On Holy Thursday, he will preside at two services, including one where he will wash and kiss the feet of elderly people in a nursing home. For the second straight year, the Argentine Pope, who has said the Church must be closer to the poor and suffering, is holding the event outside one of Rome's basilicas. Last year he held Holy Thursday's Mass of the Lord's Supper at a juvenile detention centre of Rome, where he washed and kissed the feet of women and Moslems inmates. On Good Friday and Holy Saturday he is due to preside at three services leading up the Easter Sunday, when he delivers his Easter "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) blessing and message.

15. Vatican Radio presents digital archive of Popes' voices

Entitled "The Voice of the Popes," a digital archive containing over 8000 audio recordings featuring the voice of all the Popes from Pius XI through to Francis was unveiled at Vatican Radio on Tuesday. The presentation comes in the run-up to the canonization ceremony for Popes John XXIII and John Paul II on April 27th. For the record the sound from this digital archive is available on request at the following address: relint@vatiradio.va



"Vatican Radio's sound archives date from 1931 when the radio was set up by Pope Pius the 11th and they include the voices of every Pope since then. The digital archive was compiled using audio sources that ranged from old 78 records, magnetic tape, to CDs and includes sound from over 23,000 different events.



Vatican Radio's Director General Father Federico Lombardi says the digitalization was carried out in order to prevent damage from wear and tear and guarantee a better preservation of the material for posterity. He spoke of how Vatican Radio is the custodian of the voice of all the Popes, saying its mission is to preserve these recordings and ensure the radio's intellectual property rights are protected when the sound material is used by third parties.

Special Videos

1. *Queen Elizabeth visits Pope Francis* [\(Click here\)](#)
2. *Latin American singer-songwriters pay homage to John Paul II and John XXIII* [\(Click here\)](#)
3. *John XXIII: the Pope who dodged police to walk outside the Vatican* [\(Click here\)](#)
4. *Meet the Pope's personal Music Choir* [\(Click here\)](#)

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