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## Editorial

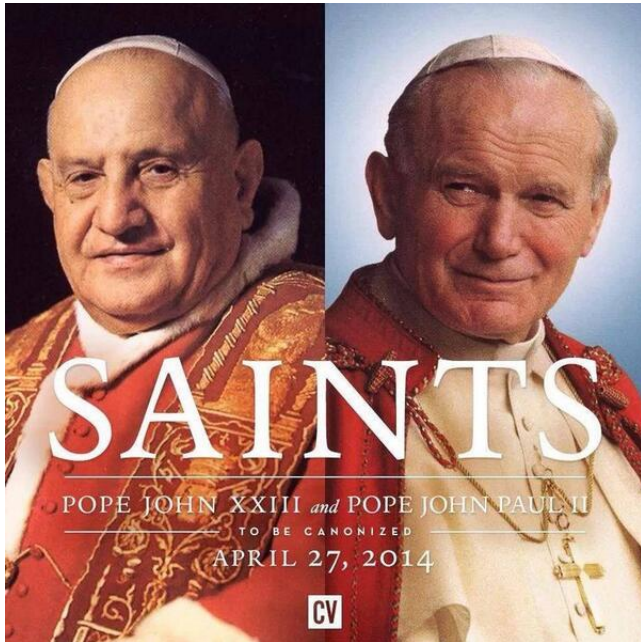
*Pilgrims from all over the globe flooded Rome hosting the first ever double canonization of two Popes of the recent past with two living Popes present at the event held last weekend. While the crowds comprised mostly of Poles it was heart warming to see so many groups of distant Latin Americans and Asians demonstrating the universal nature of Mother Church. It also speaks of the impact that the heroic Popes have had on people even from the remote corners of the Earth. The Vatican and the Roman administration rose to the occasion, organizing the mega event to a clockwork precision blending mirth and devotion, shouts of joys and chants of prayers marking it as a red-letter day in the history of the Church. Apart from the millions who witnessed the event in Rome on giant LED screens, for the first time viewers were able to watch the historic event live in 3-D movie theatres in 20 countries across North and South America and Europe through a deal between Vatican TV and Sky TV network, Sony and other partners. The Vatican's television unit CTV produced the event in 3-D and it was screened in more than 600 movie theatres worldwide.*

*This year Rome experienced an unprecedented crowd for the Holy Week and Easter as well. The spectacular Good Friday Way of the Cross at the Colosseum moved many a heart with the insightful reflections, which echoed the thoughts of our beloved Pope Francis, who expressed the same in action on Holy Thursday as he washed the feet of the old and the disabled. But at Easter the Pope reiterated Christ's call to "return to Galilee", to re-read everything in the life of Christ. May that be our Resurrection experience.*

*Fr. Melwin Pinto, SJ*

## 1. Historic dual canonization of Popes

In a historic match-up of papacies past and present, Pope Francis and emeritus Pope Benedict XVI honoured Popes John XXIII and John Paul II in the first ever canonization of two popes. For such a momentous occasion, the ceremony was actually quite short and surprisingly straightforward, with the added benefit that the relics of the two new saints were presented for universal veneration by the church for the first time. [\(brief Video of the event\)](#)



93 official delegations attended the service which included an estimated 24 heads of state. Poland sent one of the largest delegations with the current president and two former presidents, including Lech Walesa, founder of the Solidarity movement that toppled communism in Poland, which John Paul supported. The inter religious delegations included 20 Jewish leaders from the U.S., Israel, Argentina, Poland and Rome, as well as a Moslem delegation.

Hundreds of Thousands also followed the ceremony on giant screens in some of the most picturesque spots of Rome as well as Rome's Fiumuccino Airport. Religious chants rang out among thousands of people

who spent the night in sleeping bags and picnic chairs in order to be first in line for Sunday's ceremony, honouring two of modern Catholicism's most influential figures.

Pope Francis presided over the Mass and the canonization ceremony and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI concelebrated along with 150 cardinals and 700 bishops. It was the first time Benedict XVI joined Francis in celebrating Mass in public since his resignation in 2013. He had earlier attended the February ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica in which Pope Francis had installed 19 new cardinals, but as a spectator.

The preliminary part of the ceremony began with prayers, hymns and culminates with the chanting of the rhythmic Litany of Saints, like a roll call of the church's saints, each one followed by the refrain "Ora pro nobis," or "Pray for us." After Pope Francis and concelebrants proceeded to the altar, the canonization rite began. The head of the Vatican's Congregation for the causes of saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato, ritually petitioned the pope three separate times to include John XXIII and John Paul II among the saints. In the rite for beatification, there is only one such petition. The three repeated requests



for canonization "signify the importance of this celebration," noted the Vatican spokesman the Rev. Federico Lombardi.

Pope Francis then said: ***“For the honour of the Blessed Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after due deliberation and frequent prayer for divine assistance, and having sought the counsel of many of our brother bishops, we declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II be saints and we enrol them among the saints, decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole church. In the name of the Holy Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”***



Relics of the two new saints were then brought to the altar. In the case of John Paul, it was the same relic -- his blood -- used for his 2011 beatification. For John XXIII, it was a small piece of skin taken after his body was exhumed for his 2000 beatification. Relics -- the physical remains of a new saint or things he or she touched in life -- are used to help the faithful venerate. Card. Amato then thanked Francis and asked him to draw up an official document attesting to the

canonization. Francis responded "We so decree" and the rite ends with the singing of the "Gloria." The Mass then proceeded as usual.

In his homily Pope Francis praised his two predecessors as "men of courage". Paying tribute to the two new saints as "priests, bishops and popes of the 20th Century", he said that they lived through the tragic events of that century, but they were not overwhelmed by them. For them, God was more powerful.

[\(Video of the homily in Italian\)](#)

[\(For the English version of the homily of Pope Francis click here\)](#)

About 700 priests and 200 deacons distributed Communion in St. Peter's Square and to the throngs of people lined up along Via della Conciliazione, the main boulevard leading away from the square.

To the delight of the crowds packing St. Peter's Square and the adjoining Via della Conciliazione, Pope Francis concluded Sunday morning celebrations with a slow ride right to the end of the avenue and up a side street in his pope-mobile, smiling and reaching out to all. [\(Video1\)](#) [\(Video 2\)](#)

After greeting the many official delegations present for the canonization ceremony, the Pope invited Rome Mayor, Ignazio Marino, to jump onto the pope-mobile for a few minutes for a quick embrace and a thank you to the city of Rome for doing so much to host the event. The Pope in the pope-mobile then proceeded all the way down Via della Conciliazione, received by the wildly cheering faithful with outstretched arms.

## 2. Pope Francis: Woe to the wicked shepherds

“The seminary is not a refuge for the many limitations we may have, nor a shelter for one's lack of courage to move forward in life. It is instead a place to go forward on a path to become good shepherds rather than company officials; otherwise, it is better to have the courage to seek another path,” are excerpts from a strongly worded yet deeply encouraging words of Pope Francis addressed to a group of future priests.

[\(Video\)](#) The Holy Father, who spoke to the seminarians of the Pontifical Leonine College of Anagni, used the meeting to focus on the "four pillars of education" on which they can "become good shepherds in Jesus' image"



"Like other seminaries, yours aims to prepare future ordained ministers, in an atmosphere of prayer, study and fellowship," the Holy Father said to the seminarians from Italy's Lazio region. "This evangelical atmosphere, this life filled with the Holy Spirit and humanity, allows all those who are immersed in it day-to-day to assimilate the sentiments of Jesus Christ, his love for the Father and for the Church, his unreserved dedication to the People of God"

"Prayers, study, fellowship and apostolic life are the four, interacting pillars of education. Spiritual life, strong; intellectual life, serious; community life; and, ultimately, apostolic life, not in that exact order but all four very important. If one is missing, one's education falls short. As the four interact, they become the four pillars, the four dimensions, on which a seminary must live."

"You, my dear seminarians, are not training to do a job, to become officials in a company or a bureaucratic entity. We have many, many priests who walked half the walk . . . It hurts to think that they did not complete the full journey, that they have become some sort of bureaucrats, with a bureaucratic halo that bodes nothing good for the Church. Please, be careful not to fall in this yourselves! You are becoming shepherds in the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd, in order to be like Him and through Him be amid his flocks to feed his sheep."

"Faced with this vocation we can respond as the Virgin Mary did with the angel, 'How is this possible?'" Becoming "good shepherds" in Jesus' image "is something too big, and we are so small". Yet, "it is not really our doing; [. . .] it is the work of the Holy Spirit, with our collaboration." Hence, "Humbly, we must offer ourselves, like clay to be molded, because God is the potter who works with water and fire, with the Word and the Spirit." It is true "that at the beginning, there is not always a total rectitude of intention," the pope noted. Indeed, "it is unlikely that there could ever be." In fact, "All of us always have little things that fall short of the



rectitude of intention, but over time this is resolved through every day conversion. Think about the apostles! Think about James and John, one who wanted to become prime minister and the other economy minister, because that was more important. . . . The apostles . . . thought about something else and, with great patience, the Lord . . . corrected their intention and in the end, their rectitude of intention was so enhanced that they gave their life to preaching and martyrdom. [Thus] Do not be afraid!"



"Talk to your spiritual father; talk to your teachers; pray, pray, pray. You will see that the rectitude of intention will move forward." Hence, "meditate on the Gospel every day in order to pass it on through life and preaching, experience God's mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation, and never leave it," [. . .] "eat the Eucharist with faith and love in order to feed the Christian people with it." "This means that we must be men of prayer in order to become the voice of Christ who praises the Father and intercedes for our brothers." If "you are unwilling to

follow this route," or have "these attitudes and these experiences, it is best for you to have the courage to seek another path."

"In the Church, there are many ways to bear Christian witness, and many routes that lead to holiness. There is no room for mediocrity in Jesus' ministerial sequela, the kind of mediocrity that always leads to using God's holy people to one's advantage. 'Woe to the wicked shepherds who pasture themselves and not their flocks!' shouted the Prophets with great force." Augustine included these prophetic words in his *De Pastoribus*, the pope said. "Woe to the wicked shepherds because the seminary, let's face it, is not a refuge for the many limitations we may have, or a haven for psychological deficiencies or a shelter because I do not have the courage to move forward in life and I am looking for a place to defend me".

"No, it cannot be that. If your seminary were like that, it would mortgage the Church's future! No! The seminary exists to go forward, forward on [right] path. When we hear the prophets say 'woe', let that 'woe' make you reflect seriously about your future. Pius XI once said that it was better to lose a vocation than take risks with an unsure candidate. He was a mountaineer, and knew these things."

[\(For entire translated text of the address click here\)](#)

### 3. Pope Francis at Chrism Mass: the joy of being a priest



"The Lord anointed us in Christ with the oil of gladness, and this anointing invites us to accept and appreciate this great gift: the gladness, the joy of being a priest." At the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday in Saint Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis spoke about 'priestly joy,' a joy, he said, "which anoints us, an imperishable joy, a "missionary joy."

[\(Video\)](#)

The joy which anoints priests, the Pope said, "has penetrated deep within our hearts, it has shaped us,

and strength ened us sacramentally.” It is a joy that can never be taken away; although it “can lie dormant, or be clogged by sin or by life’s troubles ... deep down it remains intact, like the embers of a burnt log beneath the ashes, and it can always be renewed.” Pope Francis focused especially on the third feature of priestly joy: “Priestly joy is deeply bound up with God’s holy and faithful people, for it is an eminently missionary joy.” This joy, he said, “arises only when the shepherd is in the midst of his flock.” There, his joy is “guarded” by the faithful, by “God’s faithful people” who are able to protect and embrace their priests, to help them open their hearts “to find renewed joy.”

Priestly joy, the Holy Father continued, is guarded, not only by the flock, but “by three sisters who surround it, tend it, and defend it: sister poverty, sister fidelity, and sister obedience.” Explaining these three “sisters,” the Pope said that because the priest is poor “in terms of purely human joy,” he must seek his joy “from the Lord and from God’s faithful people.” The priest must go out of himself, seeking God and the people of God. “Going out of ourselves,” he said, “presupposes self-denial; it means poverty.”

Priestly joy is also a “sister to fidelity,” Pope Francis said – not, he explained, “in the sense that we [priests] are all ‘immaculate’ (would that by God’s grace we were!), for we are all sinners, but in the sense of an ever renewed fidelity to the one Bride, the Church.” Priests will find true joy when they are faithful to their mission, doing “all that he has to do, and letting go of everything that he has to let go of, as long as he stands firm amid the flock which the Lord entrusted to him.”

Finally, priests find joy in “sister obedience,” an obedience not only to the externals of their mission, “but also union with God the Father, the source of all fatherhood.” The Pope continued, “It is also an obedience to the Church in service: in availability and readiness to serve everyone, always, and as best as I can,” following the example of Mary. “All who are called should know that genuine and complete joy does exist in this world,” Pope Francis said. “It is the joy of being taken from the people we love and then being sent back to them as dispensers of the gifts and counsels of Jesus.”

Concluding his homily, Pope Francis prayed that the Lord might “enable many young people to discover the burning zeal which joy kindles in our hearts as soon as we have the stroke of boldness needed to respond willingly to his call.” He prayed, too, for the recently ordained, priests who have been in ministry for some time, and for elderly priests. [for the full text of the homily click here](#)



## 4. Pope washes feet of disabled on Holy Thursday

“In the humbling act of washing his disciples' feet, Jesus made Himself a servant - our servant. And he chose this path out of love saying, ‘You too must love and serve one another in love.’ This is the legacy that Jesus has left us.” Pope Francis made this exhortation during the evening Mass on Holy Thursday at a rehabilitation facility on the outskirts of Rome, where he washed the feet of four women and eight men who are living with disabilities.

Holy Thursday’s Mass of the Lord’s Supper commemorates Jesus’ surprise gesture of washing the feet of his disciples as an example of service to one another. Previous popes always held the ceremony either in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican or Rome's Basilica of Saint John Lateran and only included 12 Catholic men - usually priests – at the service. But Pope Francis, continuing a tradition he started as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentine, last year held the first Holy Thursday’ Mass of the Lord’s Supper, barely 2 weeks after his election, among the inmates of a juvenile detention centre in Rome, washing the feet of 12 of them.



This year, Pope chose to celebrate the Holy Thursday evening liturgy at Our Lady of Providence rehabilitation centre run by the Don Gnocchi Foundation. Ranging in ages from 16 to 86, nine of the 12 patients were Italian, one was a Muslim businessman from Libya, one a woman from Ethiopia and a young Catholic man from Cape Verde. During the liturgy held in the centre's chapel, two sisters helped patients, all of them with limited mobility, remove their shoes and socks. The pope then knelt on both knees on a small cushion before each person. He poured water from a small silver pitcher over each person's foot; some feet were greatly swollen due to the individual's medical condition. With a white towel, he dried each foot and kissed it, often having to bend onto the floor to reach the feet of those who were completely paralyzed.



Two aides assisted the Pope in kneeling and standing back up, which proved increasingly difficult as the 77-year-old pope made his way across the chapel to all 12 patients. Yet, before rising, he gave each one of them a long and loving gaze and broad smile.

The gesture of Jesus was like a parting gift and "an inheritance" that he left out of love, the pope explained during the Mass. "You, too, must love each other,

be servants in love," he said in a brief impromptu homily. He asked people to think of ways "how we can serve others better - that's what Jesus wanted from us." A large number of patients, their relatives as well as the facility's religious and lay staff, directors and volunteers attended the Pope’s Mass. Medical personnel and other staff members did the readings while staff and patients, some seated in wheelchairs, provided the singing and music: One person played acoustic guitar, another marked the beat with a triangle.



Msgr. Angelo Bazzarri, president of the Father Gnocchi Foundation, told Vatican Radio April 17 that the pope's decision to wash the feet of patients with different abilities, ages and religious convictions was meant to reflect the "universal gesture of a God who became man, who serves all of humanity." By choosing to visit the rehabilitation center, the pope was showing the kind of "evangelical mercy that he wants to embrace the entire world of suffering," he said.

The evening Mass was the second of two Holy Thursday liturgies over which the Pope presided. The first was a morning chism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, with the priests, bishops and cardinals of his diocese of Rome. But others too attended the Mass.

## 5. God's love, not evil, will ultimately triumph, Pope says at Way of the Cross

Pope Francis on Good Friday night presided over a candlelit Way of the Cross at Rome's landmark Colosseum, with thousands attending in reflection and prayer. For the entire event, the Pope remained



silently seated under a canopy atop a hillside overlooking the Colosseum, following the 14 stations of the Way of the Cross, at the end of which he delivered a brief impromptu reflection reminding all that the cross is the symbol of how much evil people are capable of and how much love Jesus had for a sinful humanity. "It was a heavy cross like the night for those who are

abandoned, heavy like the death of a loved one and heavy" because it took on all the pain of evil, he said, presiding over the Holy Week event. He said that Jesus shows "that evil will not have the last word," and love, mercy and forgiveness will be victorious. "From the cross we see the monstrosity of mankind when it lets itself be guided by evil. But we also see the immensity of the mercy of God, who doesn't treat us according to our sins, but according to his mercy." Do not forget those who are sick and abandoned with their own cross, but pray "they find the strength in the trials of the cross, the hope of God's resurrection and love," he said before imparting his blessing.

Each year, the Pope chooses a person or group of people to write the series of prayers and reflections for each of the 14 stations of Way of the Cross, which commemorates Christ's condemnation, his carrying the cross to Golgotha, his crucifixion and his burial. This year the Pope had commissioned Italian Archbishop Giancarlo Maria Bregantini of Campobasso-Boiano - a former factory worker, longtime prison chaplain, champion of the unemployed and fiercely outspoken critic of the Italian mafia.





In the meditations, the archbishop, who belongs to Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata, looked at how the wounds and suffering of Christ are found in the wounds and suffering of one's neighbours, family, children and world. By passing a bare wooden cross from one group of people to the next in succession, those chosen to lead the Way of the Cross acted as visible representatives of the often-hidden injustices still wounding the world. Although most stations had multiple representatives, only one at each station physically carried the cross.

For the second station on Jesus taking up his cross, the archbishop criticized the global economic crisis' grave consequences, like job insecurity, unemployment, suicide among owners of failing businesses and corruption. Symbolically, a labourer and a business leader carried the cross, "which weighs upon the world of labour, the injustice shouldered by workers," said the reflection, which was followed by a call for people to respect political life and resolve problems together. On the fourth station on Jesus meeting his mother, two former addicts carried



the cross as people meditated on the tears mothers shed for their children sent off to war, dying of cancer from toxic wastelands or lost in "the abyss of drugs or alcohol, especially on Saturday nights." For the fifth station on Jesus being helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross, two people living on the street carried the cross as a reflection was read about "finding God in everyone" and sharing "our bread and labour" with others. For the eighth station on Jesus meeting the women of Jerusalem, two women carried the cross, as the meditation deplored domestic violence. "Let us weep for those men who vent on women all their pent-up violence" and to weep for women who are "enslaved by fear and exploitation," the reflection read. But compassion is not enough, Archbishop Bregantini wrote: "Jesus demands more." Follow his example of offering reassurance and support "so that our children may grow in dignity and hope."



The archbishop's meditations had equally strong words about the sexual abuse of children and its cover-up. Two children carried the cross for the 10th station where Jesus is stripped of his garments. The reflection evoked the utter humiliation of Jesus being stripped naked, "covered only by the blood which flowed from his gaping wounds." "In Jesus, innocent, stripped and tortured, we see the outraged dignity of all the innocent, especially the little ones," the meditation read. A family held the cross for a

reflection on the need for kindness and shared suffering; two older people carried the cross during a reflection on how age and infirmity can become "a great school of wisdom, an encounter with God who is ever patient." Two Franciscan friars from the Holy Land carried the cross during a meditation on Christ emerging from the fear of death as a sign how forgiveness "renews, heals, transforms and comforts" and ends wars.

## 6. Papal preacher: Betraying Jesus is bad, doubting his mercy is worse

Pope Francis presided over a Good Friday liturgy in the afternoon in St. Peter's Basilica, commemorating the passion and death of Jesus. The pope began the traditional Holy Week rite after a silent procession down the central nave. Then he lay prostrate on the floor before the main altar in silent prayer, a sign of adoration and penance. Later, the pope and thousands of faithful stood as three deacons and the Sistine

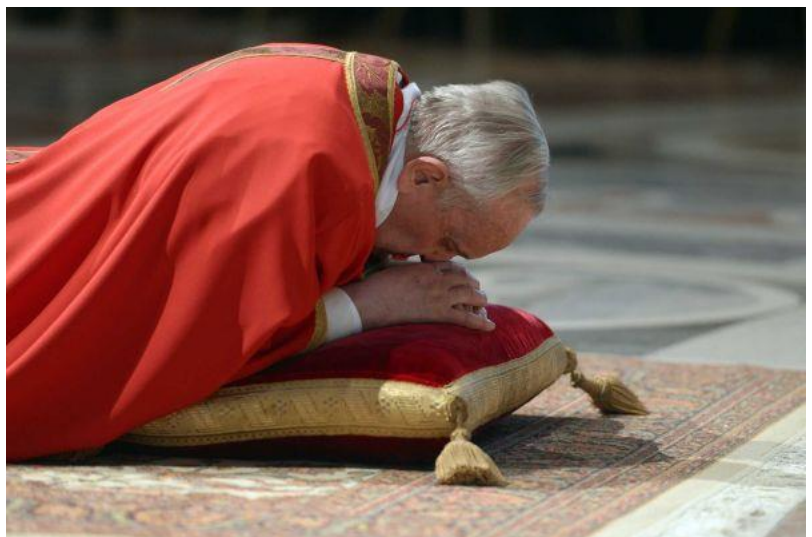


Chapel Choir chanted the account of the Passion from the Gospel of St. John. The only day in the liturgical calendar without Holy Mass with consecration of the host, the Good Friday liturgy consists of the Liturgy of the Word, Prayers of the Faithful, the Veneration of the Cross and distribution of Holy Communion consecrated the previous day.

Following tradition, the homily was delivered by Capuchin priest Father Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher of the papal household. Everyone is capable of betraying Jesus as Judas did, but no one should make the mistake of doubting God's mercy and willingness to forgive, the papal preacher said. Though Jesus knows well what is "unfolding in his disciple's heart, he doesn't

expose it, he wants to give him the possibility, until the very end, of backing out" and repenting, Fr. Cantalamessa said during the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion.

Focusing on the role of Judas, the Capuchin priest said the narrative of a person doing evil for "30 pieces of silver" keeps repeating itself throughout history. As Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and mammon," the false deity of wealth, the preacher said. The "god" of money creates "an alternative spiritual universe" where virtues are turned upside down, where faith, hope and love do not come from God, but from money, he said. Instead of believing "Everything is possible to one who has faith," as Jesus said, people believe "Everything is possible to the one who has money." He said money is involved in all of today's social ills, including the illicit drug trade, women pushed into prostitution, children snatched for their organs, the mafia, political corruption, the sale of weapons and the ongoing financial crisis. "Isn't it just as scandalous that some people collect salaries and pensions that are 100 times greater than those of the people who work under them?" he asked.



People should ask themselves whether they have bit of Judas inside them, since "you can also betray Jesus for other kinds of rewards," Fr. Cantalamessa said. "Whoever betrays his wife or her husband betrays Jesus," he said, and the same goes for government leaders who betray the public or anyone who betrays his

or her conscience. Such betrayals are worse because they happened after Christ's death and resurrection; Judas didn't know Jesus was really the son of God, while "we do." However, "Jesus never abandoned Judas." Instead, Judas abandoned all hope when he hanged himself in remorse for contributing to the death of an innocent man.

In contrast to Judas, Fr. Cantalamessa spoke about Peter who also betrayed Jesus, but who finally felt remorse. "He had faith in the mercy of Christ. Judas did not." "Judas' greatest sin wasn't having betrayed Jesus, but having doubted his mercy," the Capuchin preacher said. If anyone feels guilty for having wronged Jesus, he must not "imitate (Judas) in his lack of faith in forgiveness." The sacrament of reconciliation guarantees the penitent Christ's mercy, he said. "It is nice to experience Jesus as a teacher, as Lord, but it is even more wonderful to experience him as the saviour," who reaches out to sinners, touches those who suffer, and says, "Be made clean."

[\(For full text of the English Translation of the homily click here\)](#)



## **7. Pope at Easter Vigil: 'Return to Galilee' and rediscover God's grace**

Jesus' call to his Apostles, after his Resurrection, to "return to Galilee", is the call to re-read everything in the life of Christ "on the basis of the cross and its victory.. from this supreme act of love," said Pope Francis in his homily during the Easter Vigil celebration on Saturday evening. It is also a call to every



Christian to rediscover their baptism "as a living fountainhead, drawing new energy from the sources of our faith and our Christian experience," he said. "To return to Galilee means above all to return to that blazing light with which God's grace touched me at the start of the journey."

To "return to Galilee" also means renewing "the experience of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ who called me to follow him and to share in his mission. ... It means reviving the memory of that moment when his eyes met mine, the moment when he made me realize

that he loved me," he added. During the celebration at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the Pope also baptized 10 catechumens, the youngest of whom is a seven-year-old Italian and the eldest is a 58-year-old from Vietnam. These 10 newly baptized Christians come from different countries, including France, Belarus, Lebanon and Senegal.

[\(For full text of the Pope's homily click here\)](#)

## 8. Pope pleads for peace in Easter message

Pope Francis celebrated the Easter Morning mass, with an assembly of about 150,000 gathered in St. Peter's Square. After the mass, as is custom, he ascended to the loggia to pronounce his Easter message and to grant his blessing Urbi et Orbi.



Pope Francis prayed for peace in Ukraine and Syria in his Easter Sunday address before 150,000 people at St Peter's Square. "We ask you to enlighten and inspire the initiatives that promote peace in Ukraine." Francis asked that "all those involved, with the support of the international community, will make every effort to prevent violence and in a spirit of unity and dialogue, chart a path for the country's future".

The pope called on the international community to "boldly negotiate the peace long awaited and long overdue" in Syria, where more than 150,000 people have been killed in the civil war, a third of them civilians. Millions have fled the country.

"We pray in a particular way for Syria, that all those suffering the effects of the conflict can receive needed humanitarian aid and that neither side will again use deadly force, especially against the defenseless civil population," he said.

[\(for the Text of the Urbi et Orbi message click here\)](#)

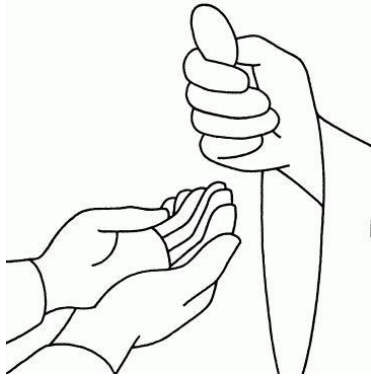
## 9. Fr. Lombardi responds to reports of Pope's call to Argentinian woman



The director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, has responded to widespread media reports about an Argentinian woman who says that Pope Francis called to tell her she could take Communion, even though her husband is divorced and they have not been married in church.

News stories earlier in the third week of April ran conflicting reports about the woman, Jacqueline Lisboa, who had written to the Pope several months ago after being denied Communion by her

parish priest. According to the reports, Fr. Bergoglio, as he called himself, picked up the phone to respond to her letter on Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> and told her the Church was in the process of dealing with the issue of Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics.



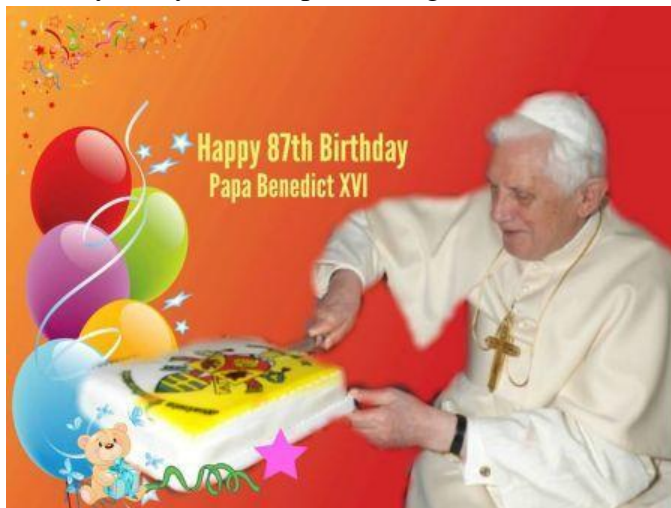
In his brief remarks on Thursday, Fr Lombardi said such conversations should be seen in the context of the Pope's "personal pastoral relationships" and not as an event that carries "consequences relating to the teaching of the Church".

***Below please find the English language translation of Fr. Lombardi's remarks:***

Several telephone calls have taken place in the context of Pope Francis' personal pastoral relationships. Since they do not in any way form part of the Pope's public activities, no information or comments are to be expected from the Holy See Press Office. That which has been communicated in relation to this matter, outside the scope of personal relationships, and the consequent media amplification, cannot be confirmed as reliable, and is a source of misunderstanding and confusion. Therefore, consequences relating to the teaching of the Church are not to be inferred from these occurrences.

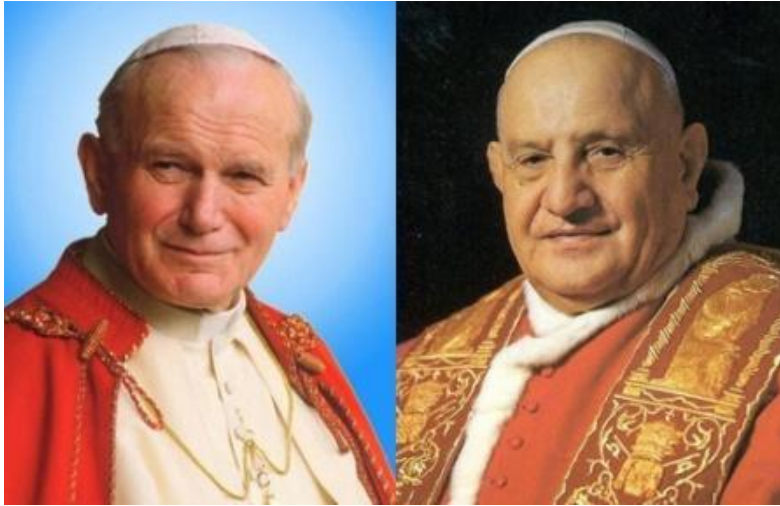
## **10. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI celebrates 87<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Vatican**

It was the first time Benedict XVI celebrated the big day as Pope Emeritus at the Vatican. Since last year, for his birthday he was just a few miles away at Castel Gandolfo. Even though a public celebration was unlikely this year, Joseph Ratzinger has had a full list of unforgettable birthdays, with music being the one common denominator. [\(Video\)](#)



He's seen it all...From Germany's Stuttgart Radio Symphonic Orchestra performing for him at the Vatican. Then all the way to the White House, where he celebrated his birthday with president George W. Bush and the first lady. But sometimes there's no better company than family. Whenever possible Benedict XVI has made it a point to celebrate his birthday with his older brother, Georg. Back in 2012, for his 85th birthday the two brothers celebrated the Pope's birthday with traditional folk music from their native Bavaria, complete with costumes and dancing.

This was actually the last birthday celebration Benedict XVI had as the head of the Catholic Church. But birthdays are always a great excuse for a party. Benedict XVI hosted his brother's 90th birthday at the Vatican, with a classical music concert. All in all, Benedict XVI celebrated a total of seven birthdays as the head of the Catholic Church. Now on his 87th birthday, classical concerts or not, he will continue to make history as the only Pope Emeritus on earth.



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## Special Videos

1. *Pilgrims pack St. Peter's Basilica to pray before the tomb of John Paul II* ([Click here](#))
  2. *John Paul II: A look back at the life of a saint* ([Click here](#))
  3. *The life of John XXIII, from a small village to the Chair of Peter* ([Click here](#))
  4. *John XXIII, eight achievements of a revolutionary pontificate* ([Click here](#))
  5. *The top ten achievements of John Paul II* ([Click here](#))
  6. *How is someone declared a saint?* ([Click here](#))
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## Aerial view of the Canonization Ceremony

