
Pope at audience: "We ask the Lord of life to deliver us from this death of war."

"I would like to take a minute to remember the victims of war", the Pope said at the end of today's audience, before the greetings to the Italian-speaking faithful. "The news of displaced persons, of people fleeing, of people killed, people wounded, of so many soldiers fallen on both sides, is news of death", Francis continued. "We ask the Lord of life to deliver us from this death of war", the appeal: "with war everything is lost, everything. There is no victory in a war: everything is defeated. May the Lord send His Spirit to make us understand that war is a defeat of humanity, which we need to defeat, all of us; that waging war is a need that destroys us, and to deliver us from this need for self-destruction." "We pray, too, for leaders to understand that buying weapons and making weapons is not the solution to the problem", the Pope's appeal: "The solution is to work together for peace and, as the Bible says, to turn weapons into instruments for peace."

"I learned hatred and anger for war from my grandfather, who fought at the Piave in 1914,"

Francis revealed in the catechesis of the Wednesday General Audience delivered in Paul VI Hall, dedicated to the legacy of old age. "He passed on to me this rage at war - Francis went on - because he told me about the suffering of a war. And this isn't learned in books or in other ways... it's learned in this way, being passed down from grandparents to grandchildren. And this is irreplaceable." "Today, unfortunately, this is not the case, and we think that grandparents are discarded material: No! They are the living memory of a people, and young people and children ought to listen to their grandparents". Francis denounced: "In our culture, which is so 'politically correct,' this path seems to be hindered in many ways: in the family, in society, in the Christian community itself. Some even propose abolishing the teaching of history, as superfluous information about worlds that are no longer relevant, which takes resources away from knowledge of the present. As if we were born yesterday." Francis thus continued with a threefold exhortation: "*An ideology that bends history to its own schemes is certainly not faithful; propaganda that adapts history to promote its own group is not faithful; it is not faithful to turn history into a tribunal in which the past is condemned and any future is discouraged.*" The Pontiff explained: "To be faithful is to tell history as it is; and only those who have lived it can tell it well. For this reason, it is very important to listen to the elderly, to listen to grandparents." The Gospels themselves, the Pope noted, "honestly tell the blessed story of Jesus without hiding the mistakes, misunderstandings, and even betrayals of the disciples. This is history, it is the truth, this is witness. This is the gift of memory that the 'elders' of the Church pass on, right from the beginning, passing it on 'from hand to hand' to the generation that follows."

"The elderly see history and pass on history",

the thesis outlined at the beginning of the catechesis. Faithfulness to God is at the heart of the Song of Moses - it accompanies us through life." "When Moses pronounces this confession of faith, he is on the threshold of the promised land, and also of his departure from life", Francis remarked: "He was one hundred and twenty years old, the account notes, 'but his eye was not dim.' That capacity to see, to really see, but also to see symbolically, as the elderly do, who are able to see things, [to see] the most radical significance of things. Moses sees history and passes on history; the elderly see history and pass on history. An old age that is granted this clarity is a precious gift for the generation that is to follow. Listening personally and directly to the story of lived faith lived, with all its highs and lows, is irreplaceable. Reading about it in books, watching it in films, consulting it on the internet, however useful it may be, will never be the same thing. This transmission - which is true and

proper tradition, the concrete transmission from the old to the young! – this transmission is sorely lacking today for the new generations, an absence that continues to grow. Why? Because this new civilization has the idea that the old are waste material, the old must be discarded. This is brutal!”

“The faith is passed on in dialect,

that is, in familiar speech, between grandparents and grandchildren, between parents and their children”, the Pope said. “The faith is always handed on in dialect, in that familiar dialect and experience of the years”, he continued: “This is the reason dialogue in a family is so important, the dialogue of children with their grandparents, who are the ones who have the wisdom of the faith.” Francis outlined a “strange anomaly”; namely, that “today, the catechism of Christian initiation generously draws on the Word of God and conveys accurate information on dogmas, the morals of the faith, and the sacraments. What is often lacking, however, is a knowledge of the Church that comes from listening to and witnessing the real history of the faith and the life of the Church community, from the beginning to the present day. As children we learn the Word of God in catechism classes; but the Church – the Church – we learn, as young people, in the classrooms and in the global information media.” “The narration of the history of faith should be like the Canticle of Moses, like the testimony of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles”, Francis’ proposal: “In other words, a story capable of recalling God’s blessings with emotion and our failings with sincerity. It would be a good thing if catechesis were to include, from the very beginning, the habit of listening, to the lived experience of the elderly; to the candid confession of the blessings received from God, which we must cherish; and to the faithful testimony of our own failures of fidelity, which we must repair and correct.”

M.Michela Nicolais