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## Pope at audience: “May national leaders be inspired by **Pacem in terris**”

“The one who goes to proclaim must move, must walk!” **Pope Francis** remarked addressing the faithful today, at the Wednesday general audience devoted to apostolic zeal according to Saint Paul, who uses the metaphor of footwear, picking up on a text from the prophet Isaiah. Paul, Francis said, “speaks of footwear as part of a suit of armour, following the analogy of the equipment of a soldier going into battle. In combat it was essential to have stable footing to avoid the pitfalls of the terrain - because the adversary often littered the battlefield with traps – and to have the strength to run and to move in the right direction.” “Evangelical zeal is the support on which proclamation is based, and heralds are somewhat like the feet of the body of Christ that is the Church”, the Pope said contextualizing to our present times.

“There is no proclamation without movement, without ‘going out’, without initiative”,

Francis remarked: “One does not proclaim the Gospel standing still, locked in an office, at one’s desk or at one’s computer, arguing like ‘keyboard warriors’ and replacing the creativity of proclamation with copy-and-paste ideas taken from here and there.” “The Gospel is proclaimed by moving, by walking, by going.” The term used by Paul to denote the footwear of those who bear the Gospel “is a Greek word denoting readiness, preparation, alacrity”, the Pope explained: “It is the opposite of sloppiness, which is incompatible with love.” “A herald is ready to go, and knows that the Lord passes by in a surprising way. He or she must therefore be free from schemes and prepared for an unexpected and new action”, is the profile sketched by the Pope. “**One who proclaims the Gospel cannot be fossilised in cages of plausibility or the idea that ‘it has always been done this way,’** but is ready to follow a wisdom that is not of this world,” Francis observed. “This is why”, he went on, “it is important to have this readiness for the newness of the Gospel, this attitude that involves momentum, taking the initiative, going first. It means not letting pass by the opportunities to promulgate the Gospel of peace, that peace that Christ knows how to give more and better than the world gives.”

“I exhort you to be evangelizers who are moving, without fear, who go forward, in order to bring the beauty of Jesus, to bring the newness of Jesus who changes everything”,

The Pope concluded in unscripted remarks: “are you disposed to let Jesus change your heart? Or are you a lukewarm Christian, who is not moving? Are you an enthusiast of Jesus, are you going forward?”, Francis asked, calling on the believers to reflect on these questions. In the traditional greeting to the Italian-speaking faithful at the end of the Wednesday audience, Francis called upon “the faithful and all men and women of good will to read **Pacem in Terris**, praying that

“national leaders may be inspired by it in their plans and decisions.”

“Yesterday we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of **Pacem in Terris** that St. John XXIII addressed to the Church and to the world at a time of heightened tensions between two opposing blocs involved in the so-called Cold War,” Francis recalled: “The Pope offered a broad horizon of peace-building and peace-making for all. In God’s plan for the world and the human family, **that encyclical was a true blessing, like clear skies amid dark clouds. Its message retains its topical relevance today.**” The Pope went on to quote a passage from **Pacem in Terris**, before inviting the faithful to read it collectively: “The same law of nature that governs the life and conduct of individuals must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another. Their relationships, therefore, must

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be harmonized in accordance with the dictates of truth, justice, willing cooperation, and freedom.”

“Let us persevere in prayer for the martyred Ukraine. Let us pray for the suffering of Ukraine”,

the final appeal: **"Today, in a world that is increasingly tried by wars and becoming increasingly distant from God, we need the Father's mercy even more,"** Francis said in his greetings to the Polish-speaking faithful. “Next Sunday, Divine Mercy Sunday, we celebrate the merciful love of God,” the Pope recalled in his final greeting to the Italian-speaking faithful. “The Lord never ceases to be merciful,” he continued: “let us reflect on the mercy of God, who always welcomes us, always accompanies us, never leaves us alone.”

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