
Papa Francesco: “pray for peace, in this time of world war”

“Where humility is lacking, there is war, discord and division”: these were the concluding remarks of **Pope Francis** delivered in unscripted remarks at the end of the Wednesday catechesis devoted to humility, which concludes the cycle on virtues. This virtue, Francis said, “is not part of the seven cardinal and theological virtues, but it is at the base of Christian life. “Humility is everything”, Francis said: “It is what saves us from the Evil One, and from the danger of becoming his accomplices. It is the source of peace in the world and in the Church. God has given us an example of this in Jesus and Mary, for our salvation and happiness.” In his greetings to the Italian-speaking faithful, the Pope called for prayers for vocations and consecrated life, noting that “there is a shortage of vocations in Italy.” “In this time of world war, let us pray for peace,” he said: “Let us pray for peace. We need peace. The world is at war. Let us not forget the martyred Ukraine, which is suffering so much.” Francis exhorted the faithful: “Let us not forget Palestine, let us not forget Israel: may this war come to an end! Let us not forget Myanmar, and let us not forget the many countries at war.”

“The delirium of omnipotence, which is so dangerous, often arises in the human heart, and this does us a great deal of harm”,

Francis said in the opening lines of the catechesis. Humility, Francis explained, “is the great antagonist of the most mortal of sins, namely arrogance.”: “Whereas pride and arrogance swell the human heart, making us appear to be more than we are, humility restores everything to its correct dimension: we are wonderful creatures, but we are limited, with qualities and flaws.” “From the beginning, the Bible reminds us that we are dust, and to dust we shall return”, the Pope said, adding that “it takes very little to free ourselves from the demon of arrogance. It suffices to contemplate a starry sky to restore the correct measure. Modern science enables us to extend the horizon much, much farther, and to feel the mystery that surrounds us and which we inhabit even more. Blessed are the people who hold in their heart the perception of their own smallness and these people are preserved from a very ugly vice which is arrogance.”

“Humility is the gateway to all the virtues”,

Francis remarked. “Mercy, and purity of heart stem from that inner sense of smallness”, he explained. The Pope went on to remind the faithful that “in the first pages of the Gospels, humility and poverty of spirit seem to be the source of everything.” “The announcement of the angel does not happen at the doors of Jerusalem, but in a remote village in Galilee, so insignificant that people used to say, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’”, the Pope pointed out, “but it is exactly from there that the world is reborn.” “The chosen heroine is not a little queen who grew up coddled, but an unknown girl: Mary”, he remarked: “She herself is the first to be astonished when the angel brings God’s announcement. And in her hymn of prayer, it is indeed this wonder that stands out.” “God is attracted by the smallness of Mary, which is above all an inner smallness”, Francis said. “And He is also attracted by our smallness, when we accept it”, Francis added in unscripted remarks: “From here on, Mary will be careful not to take centre stage. Her first decision after the angelic annunciation is to go and help, to go and serve her cousin.” “Humble people never want to come out of their hiding place,” the Pope continued off-text: “We can imagine that she, too, has known difficult moments, days when her faith advanced in darkness. But this never made her humility waver, which in Mary was a granitic virtue. This smallness of hers is her invincible strength: it is she who remains at the foot of the cross, while the illusion of a triumphant Messiah is shattered.”