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## Pope at audience: “We cannot tolerate racism in any form”

“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life,” said the Pope in the concluding remarks at today’s General Audience, addressing the “dear brothers and sisters in the United States” with an invitation to pray for George Floyd, the African American killed by the police in Minneapolis. “At the same time – Francis said - we have to recognise that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating.” Patriarch Abraham is “the perfect man of God”, said the Pope in the opening lines of his catechesis livestreamed from the Library of the Apostolic Palace, dedicated to the first patriarch, present in the great Jewish, Christian and Islamic spiritual traditions. Abraham, Francis said, is “the man of the Word”, who acts on the basis of a promise, of “a voice that spurs him to uproot himself from his homeland, from the roots of his family, to move towards a new future, a different future.” “It takes courage”, but Abraham “trusts in God’s word”, and with this departure a new way of conceiving the relationship with God is born. **With Abraham, “the life of the believer begins to be conceived of as a vocation**, that is, as a calling, as a place where a promise is fulfilled; and he or she moves in the world not so much under the weight of an enigma, but with the strength of that promise, which one day will be fulfilled.” “And Abraham believed in God’s promise. He believed and he went, ‘without knowing where he was going’”, the Pope said citing by heart the Letter to the Hebrews: “But he trusted.” *“in Abraham’s life, faith becomes history.” In fact “Abraham, with his life, by his example, teaches us this way, this path on which faith becomes history.”* “God is no longer seen only in cosmic phenomena, as a distant God who can inspire terror”. The God of Abraham becomes “my God, the God of my personal history, who guides my steps, who does not abandon me; the God of my days, the companion of my adventures; the God of Providence.” “I ask myself, and I ask you”, the Pope asked ad lib: “do we have this experience of God? “My God”; the God who accompanies me, the God of my personal history, the God who guides my steps, who does not abandon me, the God of my days? Do we have this experience? Let us think about this a little.” **Our God “is not an abstract God or a cosmic God.** It is the God of a person, of a calling, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, the God who is certainty, who is sentiment, who is joy.” This experience of Abraham is also testified to in one of the most original texts in the history of spirituality: the Memorial of **Blaise Pascal**. It begins as follows: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and wise men. Certainty, certainty. Sentiment. Joy. Peace. God of Jesus Christ.” “This memorial, written on a small parchment, and found after his death stitched inside a philosopher’s robe, expresses not an intellectual reflection that a wise man like him might conceive about God, but the living, experienced sense of his presence”, the Pope said: “Pascal even notes the precise moment in which he felt that reality, having finally encountered it: the evening of November 23, 1654.” *The God of Abraham is a “Surprising God” to Whom Abraham is always faithful, “up to the supreme test”, when God asks him to sacrifice his very own son: “Here Abraham lives faith like a drama, like walking on tenterhooks in the night, under a sky this time without stars. And very often this happens to us too, to walk in the dark, but with faith.”* **“Let us learn from Abraham, let us learn to pray with faith”**, the Pope concluded: “listen to the Lord, walk, dialogue to the point of arguing.” “We must not be afraid of discussing with God!” Even being angry with God “is a form of prayer. Because only a son or daughter is capable of being angry with his or her father and then meeting him again. With God, we learn to speak like a son to his father: to listen to him, to answer, to argue. But transparent, like a son with his father. This is how Abraham teaches us to pray.”