
Pope at audience: “We are more important to God than all of the sins that we can commit”

“We are more important to God than all of the sins that we can commit.” Because “He is a Father, He is a Mother, He is pure love, He has blessed us forever”, the Pope assured in today’s livestreamed General Audience devoted to the prayer of Blessing. In unwritten remarks, characterizing various passages of the catechesis, Francis recalled the figure of mothers in line to see their imprisoned child. “They do not cease to love their child”, he said: “They know that the people passing by on the bus are thinking: ‘Ah, that is the mother of a prisoner...’” but “their child is more important than their embarrassment.” It is an impressive experience to read these biblical texts of blessing in a prison, or in a rehabilitation group, the Pope said. “To allow these people to hear that they are still blessed, notwithstanding their grave errors, that the heavenly Father continues to desire their good and to hope that they will open themselves in the end to the good. Even if their closest relatives have abandoned them since they by now judge them to be irredeemable, they are always children to God.” “God cannot erase in us the image of sons and daughters”, Francis added: “each one of us is His son, His daughter.” “At times we see miracles happen”, the Pope expounded: “men and women who are reborn because they find this blessing that has anointed them as children. For God’s grace changes lives: He takes us as we are, but He never leaves us as we are.” At the end of the audience, before the greetings to Italian-speaking faithful attending the audience online, the Pope recalled in prayer the victims of a heinous terror attack in Nigeria, which took the lives of over 140 people, including many children, and the four missionary nuns kidnapped, raped and assassinated in El Salvador forty years ago. **In the creation accounts, “God continually blesses life, always”**, the Pope said in the opening lines of the catechesis: At the world’s beginning, there is a God who ‘speaks well’, who blesses, and when He creates man, and creation is complete, He recognizes that he is ‘very good’. Shortly thereafter, the beauty that God had imprinted within His work will be altered, and the human being will become a degenerate creature, capable of spreading evil and death in the world; but nothing will ever take away God’s original imprint of goodness that God placed in the world, in human nature, in all of us: the capacity of blessing and of being blessed.” Francis said: *“There is no sin that can completely erase the image of Christ present in each one of us. No sin can erase that image that God has given us – the image of Christ. Sin can disfigure it, but not remove it from God’s mercy. A sinner can remain in error for a long time, but God is patient till the end, hoping that the sinner’s heart will eventually open and change.”* The image chosen by Francis: *“God is like a good father, and like a good mother.”* “They never stop loving their child, no matter what he or she may have done wrong, always.” **“God has taught us how to bless and we must bless** – through the prayer of praise, of adoration, of thanksgiving.” In the closing lines of his catechesis the Pope remarked: “Prayer is joy and thanksgiving”: “We cannot but bless this God who blesses us; we must bless everyone in Him.” *“This is the root of Christian meekness”*, Francis said: *“the ability of feeling blessed and the ability to bless. If all of us were to do this, wars would surely not exist. This world needs blessings, and we can give blessings and receive blessings.* The Father loves us. The only thing that remains for us is the joy of blessing Him, and the joy of thanking Him, and of learning from Him not to curse, but to bless. We have a blessed heart and curses cannot come out of a heart that has been blessed.

May the Lord teach us never to curse, but to bless.”

M.Michela Nicolais