
Pope at audience: “Those who don’t follow the path of humility only have a mirror in which to look at themselves”

“The message of the Gospels is clear: the birth of Jesus is a universal event that concerns all of humanity”, the Pope said in Wednesday’s audience devoted to Christmas now imminent, recalling “the event history cannot dispense with: the birth of Jesus.” In his closing remarks, Francis urged European countries to act with “shared responsibility” with regard to migrants. As those he brought with him from Cyprus and Greece, some of whom were present today in Paul VI Hall. *“Humility is the only way that leads us to God”, the Pope said. “At the same time, specifically because it leads us to Him, humility leads us also to the essentials of life, to its truest meaning, to the most trustworthy reason for why life is truly worth living.”* **“Humility alone opens us up to the experience of truth, of authentic joy, of knowing what matters”, Francis assured: “Without humility we are ‘cut off’, we are cut off from understanding God and from understanding ourselves.”** “The Magi may have even been great according to the world’s logic, but they made themselves lowly, humble, and precisely because of this they succeeded in finding Jesus and recognising Him”, the role model: “They accepted the humility of seeking, of setting out on a journey, of asking, of taking a risk, of making a mistake. Every person, in the depths of his or her heart, is called to seek God”. “We all have that restlessness”, the Pope added in unscripted remarks: “Our work is not to ‘snuff out’ that restlessness, but to allow it to grow.” He then called on everyone to make the prayer of Saint Anselm our own: “Lord, teach me to seek you, and reveal yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek you if you do not teach me how, nor find you unless you reveal yourself. Let me seek you in desiring you; let me desire you in seeking you; let me find you in loving you; let me love you in finding you.” *“May each one of us draw near to the creche in our own homes or in the church or in another place, and try to make an act of adoration, inside: ‘I believe you are God, that this baby is God. Please, grant me the grace of humility to be able to understand’.”* **“I would like to put the poor in the front row”,** Francis said, “those whom – as Saint Paul VI used to exhort – ‘we must love because in a certain way they are the sacrament of Christ; in them – in the hungry, the thirsty, the exiles, the naked, the ill, prisoners – He wanted to be mystically identified. We must help them, suffer with them, and also follow them because poverty is the surest path to possess the Kingdom of God in its fullness.” “For this reason, we must ask for the grace of humility”, His Holiness continued ad lib: “Lord, that I might not be proud, that I might not be self-sufficient, that I might not believe that I am the centre of the universe. Make me humble. Grant me the grace of humility. It is the only way; without humility we will never find God: we will find ourselves.”

“The person who is not humble only has a mirror in which to look at themselves”, the Pope continued in unscripted remarks: “Let us ask the Lord to break this mirror.”

“I would like to accompany to Bethlehem all those who have no religious restlessness, who do not pose the question of God, or who may even fight against religion, all those who are improperly identified as atheists.” Francis concluded his catechesis reiterating the message of the Second Vatican Council: “The Church holds that the recognition of God is in no way hostile to man’s dignity, since this dignity is rooted and perfected in God. The Church knows that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart.” “Let’s return home with the angel’s song: ‘Peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!’” is the Pope’s wish to all: “Let us always remember: ‘In this is love, not that we loved God that he loved us, he first loved us’, he has sought us. Let’s not forget this.” “This is the reason for our joy”, Francis said: “knowing that we are loved without any merit, we are always loved first by God, with a love so concrete that He took on flesh and came to live in our midst., in that Baby that we see in the crib. This love has a name and a face: Jesus is the name and the face of love – this is the foundation of our joy.” “May everyone say this” –

is the final invitation in unscripted remarks: "God comes for me. The awareness that to seek God, to find God, to accept God, humility is needed: to seek with humility the grace of breaking the mirror of vanity, of pride, of looking at ourselves. To look at Jesus, to look toward the horizon, to look at God who comes to us and who touches our hearts with that restlessness that brings us hope. Happy and holy Christmas!"

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