

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Forty-fourth year, number 35 (2209)

Vatican City

Wednesday, 31 August 2011

Holy Father's General Audience Catechesis

WYD in Madrid 2011



At the General Audience on Wednesday, 24 August, the Holy Father relives World Youth Day. See page 6

Priestly celibacy in the teachings of the Popes

'Sacerdotalis Caelibatus'

At the beginning of this year a colloquium was held in Ars, France, on the theme: "Priestly Celibacy: Foundations, Joys and Challenges". Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy gave a series of talks on the teachings of the Popes from Pius XI to Benedict XVI. In this edition we print the lecture the Cardinal gave on Paul VI and the Encyclical on priestly celibacy.



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At the Angelus the Pope recalls that the cross does not mean defeat

The human being in God's loving plan

On Sunday, 28 August, the Holy Father introduced the recitation of the Angelus with the faithful at Castel Gandolfo with a meditation on the divergence between the Father's loving plan and our human projects, which are geared solely to social and financial success. The following is a translation of the Pope's Reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In today's Gospel Jesus explains to his disciples that he must "go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16:21).

Everything seems to have been turned upside down in the disciples' hearts! How could "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16) suffer unto death? The Apostle Peter rebels, he refuses to accept this route, he rebukes the Teacher saying: "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (v. 22). The divergence between the Father's loving plan – which even went as far as the gift of the Only-Begotten Son



on the Cross to save humanity – and the disciples' expectations, wishes and projects stands out clearly. And today too this contrast is repeated: when the fulfilment of one's life is geared solely to social success and to physical and financial well-being, one no longer reasons according to God but according to men (v. 23).

Thinking as the world thinks is to set God aside, not accepting his plan of love, preventing him, as it were, from doing his wise will. For this reason Jesus says some particularly harsh words to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me" (*ibid.*). The Lord teaches that "the way of discipleship [is] the way to follow him [walk behind him],

the Crucified. In all three Gospels he also interprets this 'following' on the way of the Cross" as "the indispensable way for man to 'lose his life', without which it is impossible for him to find himself" (*Jesus of Nazareth*, English edition, New York, p. 287).

As he invited the disciples, Jesus also addresses an invitation to us: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). A Christian follows the Lord when he accepts lovingly his own cross, which in the world's eyes seems a defeat and to "lose life" (cf. vv. 25-26), knowing that he is not carrying it alone but with Jesus, sharing his same journey of self-giving.

The Servant of God Paul VI wrote: "In a mysterious way, Christ himself accepts death... on the Cross, in order to eradicate from man's heart the sins of self-sufficiency and to manifest to the Father a complete filial obedience" (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, 9 May 1975). By willingly accepting death, Jesus carries the cross of all human beings and becomes a source of salvation for the whole of humanity.

St Cyril of Jerusalem commented: "The glory of the Cross led those who were blind through ignorance into light, loosed all who were held fast by sin and brought redemption to the whole world of mankind" (*Catechesis Illuminatorum* XIII, 1: *de Christo crucifixo et sepulto*: PG 33, 772 B).

Dear friends, Let us entrust our prayers to the Virgin Mary and also to St Augustine whose Memorial we are celebrating today, so that each one of us may be able to follow the Lord on the way of the cross and let ourselves be transformed by divine grace, renewing – as St Paul says in the liturgy today – our minds so that we "may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2).

After the Angelus the Pope said:

Dear Friends, I am glad to address a cordial greeting to Bishop Marcello Semeraro, Bishop of this Diocese of Albano, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his priestly Ordination; and I extend it, for the same anniversary, to Arch-

Rimini Meeting

Certainty is born from faith

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, SDB, conveys the Holy Father's Message to participants for this year's 32nd Meeting.

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