



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 20 March 2022*

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, happy Sunday!

We are at the heart of our Lenten journey, and today the Gospel begins by presenting Jesus who comments on some news of the day. While people still remember the 18 who died when a tower collapsed on them, they tell him about some Galileans whom Pilate had killed (cf. *Lk 13:1*). And there is a question that seems to accompany these tragic affairs: who is to blame for these terrible events? Perhaps those people were guiltier than others and God punished them? These are questions that also come up today. When crime news weighs on us and we feel powerless before evil, we often ask ourselves: is it perhaps a punishment from God? Did he bring about a war or a pandemic to punish us for our sins? And why does the Lord not intervene?

We must be careful: when evil oppresses us, we run the risk of losing our clarity and, in order to find an easy answer to what we are unable to explain, we end up putting the blame on God. And very often the bad habit of using profanities comes from this. How often do we attribute to him our woes and misfortunes in the world, to he who instead leaves us always free and hence never intervenes by imposing himself, but only by proposing himself; He who never uses violence and indeed suffers for us and with us! In fact, Jesus rejects and strongly contests the idea of blaming God for our evils: those persons who were killed by Pilate and those who died beneath the tower were not any more at fault than others, and they were not victims of a ruthless and vindictive God, which does not exist! Evil can never come from God because “He does not deal with us according to our sins” (*Ps 103:10*), but according to his mercy. This is God’s style. He cannot treat us

otherwise. He always treats us with mercy.

But rather than blaming God, Jesus says we need to look within ourselves: it is sin that produces death; it is our selfishness that tears apart relationships; it is our wrong and violent choices that unleash evil. At this point the Lord offers the true solution. What is it? Conversion: He says, “unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (*Lk 13:5*). It is an urgent call, especially during this time of Lent. Let us welcome it with an open heart. Let us convert from evil, let us renounce the sin that seduces us, let us be open to the logic of the Gospel because where love and fraternity reign, evil no longer has power!

But Jesus knows that conversion is not easy, and he wants to help us here. He knows that we often repeat the same mistakes and the same sins; that we become discouraged, and perhaps it may seem that our commitment to do good is useless in a world where evil appears to rule. Thus, after his appeal, he encourages us with a parable that tells of the patience of God. We must keep in mind God’s patience, the patience he has for us. He offers the comforting image of a fig tree that does not bear fruit during the accorded season, but is not cut down. More time is given to it, another possibility. I like to think that a nice name for God could be “the God of another possibility”: God always gives us another opportunity, always, always. That is what his mercy is like. This is how the Lord is with us. He does not cut us out of his love. He does not lose heart or tire of offering us his trust again, with tenderness. Brothers and sisters, God believes in us! God trusts us and accompanies us with patience, the patience of God with us. He does not become discouraged, but always instills his hope in us. God is Father and looks after you like a father. As the best of fathers, he does not look at the achievements you have not yet reached, but the fruits you can still bear. He does not keep track of your shortcomings but encourages your potential. He does not dwell on your past, but confidently bets on your future. This is because God is close to us, he is close to us. Let us not forget that the style of God is closeness. He is close with mercy and tenderness. In this way, God accompanies us: with closeness, mercy, and tenderness.

Thus, let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to fill us with hope and courage, and kindle in us the desire for conversion.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, unfortunately, the violent aggression against Ukraine has not stopped, a senseless massacre where slaughter and atrocities are repeated every day. There is no justification for this! I plead with all those who are involved in the international community to truly be committed to putting an end to this abhorrent war.

Again this week, missiles and bombs have fallen on civilians, the elderly, children, and pregnant

mothers. I went to see the wounded children who are here in Rome. One was missing an arm; another had a head injury... innocent children. I think of the millions of Ukrainian refugees who have to flee, leaving everything behind, and I feel a great pain for those who do not even have the opportunity to escape. Many grandparents, sick and poor people separated from their own families. Many children and fragile people are left to die under the bombs, without being able to receive help and without finding safety even in the air raid shelters. All this is inhuman! Indeed, it is also sacrilegious because it goes against the sacredness of human life, especially against defenceless human life, which should be respected and protected, not eliminated, and which comes before any strategy! Let us not forget, it is inhuman and sacrilegious cruelty! Let us pray in silence for those who are suffering.

It comforts me to know that the people left under the bombs do not lack the closeness of their pastors, who in these tragic days are living the Gospel of charity and fraternity. I have spoken with some of them on the phone during these days. They are close to the people of God. Thank you, dear brothers and sisters, for this witness and for the concrete support you are offering courageously to so many desperate people! I also think of the Apostolic Nuncio, who was just made a Nuncio, Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, who has remained in Kyiv since the beginning of the war along with his collaborators and who with his presence brings me close every day to the martyred Ukrainian people. Let us be close to this people, let us embrace them with affection, with concrete commitment and prayer. And please, let us not get used to war and violence! Let us not tire of welcoming them with generosity as is being done, not only now during the emergency, but also in the weeks and months to come. Because you know that at first, we all do everything we can to welcome, but then the habit of it cools our hearts somewhat, and we forget. Let us think of these women and children who in time, without work, separated from their husbands, will be sought out by the 'vultures' of society. Please, let us protect them.

I invite every community and all the faithful to join me on Friday, 25 March, Solemnity of the Annunciation, for the Solemn Act of Consecration of humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that she, the Queen of Peace, may bring peace to the world.

I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims who have come from Italy and various countries. In particular, I greet the faithful from Madrid, the international group "Agorà degli abitanti della terra", the doctors and rescuers of the 118 Emergency Service, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, "Charis" — the only one recognized officially, "Charis", not others —, and the members of the Focolari Movement. I greet the Piccolo Coro dell'Antoniano from Bologna with the band of the Polizia di Stato, the "Ensemble Vox Cordis" choir of Fornovo San Giovanni, the "San Vincenzo Grossi" choir of Pizzighettone, young people of the profession of faith of Angera, Sesto Calende and Ternate, the pilgrimage of the Diocese of Asti, and the faithful from Venice and Sassari.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci.

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