POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 12 December 2021

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno*!

The Gospel in today's Liturgy, the Third Sunday of Advent, presents us with various groups of people — the crowd, the publicans and soldiers — who, touched by John the Baptist's preaching, ask him: "What then should we do?" (*Lk* 3:10). *What then shall we do?* This is the question they asked. Let us reflect a little on this question.

It does not stem from a sense of duty. Rather, the heart is touched by the Lord. It is the enthusiasm for his coming that leads them to ask: *what shall we do?* Then John says: "The Lord is near. What shall we do?" Let us give an example: let us think of a dear one who is coming to visit us. We joyfully and impatiently await them. To properly welcome them, we will clean the house, we will prepare the best dinner possible, perhaps a gift… In short, there are things we will do. It is the same with the Lord. The joy of his coming makes us ask: *what shall we do?* But God elevates this question to a higher level: what should I do with my life? What am I called to? What will fulfil me?

By suggesting this question, the Gospel reminds us of something important: life has a task for us. Life is not meaningless; it is not left to chance. No! It is a gift the Lord grants us, saying to us: discover who you are, and work hard to make the dream that is your life come true! Each of us — let us not forget this — *has a mission to accomplish*. So, let us not be afraid to ask the Lord: what shall I do? Let us ask him this question repeatedly. It also recurs in the Bible: in the Acts of the

Apostles, several people, hearing Peter who proclaimed Jesus' resurrection, "were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" (2:37). Let us ask ourselves as well: what would be good for me to do for myself and for my brothers and sisters? How can I contribute to the good of the Church, to the good of society? The Season of Advent is meant for this: to stop and ask ourselves how to prepare for Christmas. We are so busy with all the preparations, with gifts and things that pass. But let us ask ourselves what we should do for Jesus and for others! What shall we do?

After the question, "what shall we do?", the Gospel lists John the Baptist's responses that are *different for each group*. In fact, John recommends that those who have two tunics should share with those who have none; to the publicans who collect taxes, he says: "Collect no more than is appointed you" (*Lk* 3:13); to the soldiers: "Do not mistreat or extort money from anyone (cf. v. 14). He directs a specific word to each person that responds to their actual situation in life. This offers us a precious teaching: *faith is incarnated in concrete life*. It is not an abstract theory. Faith is not an abstract theory, a generalized theory — no! Faith touches our very flesh and transforms each of our lives. Let us think about the concreteness of our faith. I, my faith: is it something abstract or concrete? Does it lead me to serving others, helping out?

And so, in conclusion, let us ask ourselves: what can I do concretely during these days as we draw near to Christmas? How can I do my part? Let us make a concrete commitment, even if small, that is adapted to our situation in life, and let us continue to do it to prepare ourselves for this Christmas. For example: I can call a person who is alone, visit that elderly person or that person who is ill, do something to serve a poor person, someone in need. Even still: maybe I need to ask forgiveness, grant forgiveness, clarify a situation, pay a debt. Perhaps I have neglected prayer and after a long time, it is time to draw near to the Lord's forgiveness. Brothers and sisters, let us find something concrete and do it! May Our Lady, in whose womb God became flesh, help us.

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After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sister,

I want to assure you of my prayers for dear Ukraine, for all its Churches and religious communities, and for all its people so that the tensions it is experiencing may be resolved through serious international dialogue and not with weapons. A statistic I read recently saddens me greatly: more weapons were produced this year than last year. Weapons are not the right path. May the Lord's Birth bring peace to Ukraine.

I also pray for the victims of the tornado that hit Kentucky and other areas of the United States of

America.

And now, allow me to switch to Spanish. I warmly greet the communities of the entire Latin American continent and the Philippines — how many flags from American countries — who have gathered here in Saint Peter's Square to recite the Rosary in honour of the Virgin of Guadalupe and to consecrate themselves to her, congratulations! I congratulate you who, with this gesture, have united yourselves to those who, from Alaska to Patagonia, celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the true God by whom we live, every 12 December. May the Virgin of Guadalupe and Saint Juan Diego teach us how to always walk together from the peripheries toward the centre in communion with the Successors of the Apostles, who are the Bishops, so as to bear good news to everyone. This experience must be repeated over and over again. In this way, God, who is communion, will move us toward conversion and the renewal of the Church and of society, which we need so much in the Americas — the situation in many American countries is very sad — as well as throughout the world. I am happy that through acts of faith and public witness such as what you are doing today, we begin preparations for the Jubilee of Guadalupe in 2031, and the Jubilee of the Redemption in 2033. We always have to keep looking forward. Everyone together — *Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!*

I also extend best wishes to Caritas Internationalis which is celebrating its 70th anniversary. It's young. It needs to grow and get stronger! Throughout the world, Caritas is the Church's loving hand outstretched to the poor and most vulnerable, in whom Christ is present. I invite you to carry your service forward with humility and creativity so as to reach the most marginalised and to foster integral development as the antidote to a "throw-away" culture and indifference. In particular, I encourage your international "Together We" campaign, founded on the strength of the community in promoting the care of creation and the poor. The wounds inflicted on our common home have devastating effects on the least. But communities can contribute to the necessary ecological conversion. This is why I invite you to join Caritas Internationalis' campaign. And you, dear friends of Caritas Internationalis, continue your work in streamlining the organisation so that the money doesn't go to the organisation but to the poor. Streamline the organisation well.

And I greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims; especially you, boys and girls who have come with your Baby Jesus figurines to receive the blessing. At the end, I will bless all the Baby Jesus figures. I thank the Roman Oratory Centre, and I ask you to bring my Christmas greetings to your grandparents and all your dear ones.

I greet the faithful of Leiria, Portugal and those from Saint Aloysius (Luigi) Gonzaga parish in Rome. I greet the children from Civitavecchia who are preparing themselves for First Communion, and the children from Saint Mary Star of Evangelization in Rome who are preparing for Confirmation. I greet the Adult Scouts from Rimini and from San Marino-Montefeltro and the group of workers from the school in Sondrio, as well as the people from the villages of Ardea whom I encourage to be dedicated to dialogue for the care of their territory. I also greet the group from

Senigallia in The Marches region.

And I wish all of you a happy Sunday. Once again, we salute Our Lady of Guadalupe. *Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe* ! Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci* !