



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Second Sunday of Advent, 10 December 2017

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Last Sunday we began Advent with the call to be vigilant; today, the Second Sunday of this season of preparation for Christmas, the liturgy indicates to us its proper content: it is a time to recognize the *shortcomings* in our life, to *smooth out the roughness* of pride and to make room for Jesus who comes.

The Prophet Isaiah addresses the people, proclaiming the end of the Exile in Babylon and the return to Jerusalem. He prophesies: “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord... Every valley shall be lifted up’” (40:3-4). The valleys to be lifted up represent all the shortcomings of our behaviour before God, all our sins of omission. One shortcoming in our life could be the fact that we do not pray or that we pray little. Advent is thus a favourable time to pray with greater intensity, to reserve to the spiritual life the important place it deserves. Another shortcoming could be a lack of charity for our neighbour, above all toward people most in need of help, not only material, but also spiritual. We are called to be more attentive, closer, to the needs of others. Like John the Baptist, in this way we can open the ways of hope in the desert of the barren hearts of many people.

“Every mountain and hill shall be made low” (cf. v. 4), Isaiah again exhorts. The mountains and hills that must be made low are pride, arrogance, insolence. Where there is pride, where there is insolence, where there is arrogance, the Lord cannot enter because that heart is full of pride, of insolence, of arrogance. For this reason, we must allay this pride. We must take on attitudes of meekness and humility, without reproach, to listen, to speak with meekness and thus to prepare

for the coming of our Saviour, He who is meek and humble of heart (cf. Mt 11:29). Then we are asked to eliminate all obstacles that we set against our union with the Lord: “the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed” — says Isaiah — “and all flesh shall see it together” (40:4-5). These actions, however, must be performed with joy, because they are designed in preparation for the coming of Jesus. At home, when we await the visit of a dear person, we prepare everything with care and gladness. In the same way, we want to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord: to await him each day attentively, so as to be filled by his grace when he comes.

The Saviour whom we await is able to transform our life with his grace, with the power of the Holy Spirit, with the power of love. The Holy Spirit, in fact, infuses our hearts with God’s love, the inexhaustible source of purification, of new life and freedom. The Virgin Mary fully lived this reality, allowing herself to be ‘baptized’ by the Holy Spirit who inundated her with his power. May she, who prepared for the coming of Christ with the totality of her existence, help us to follow her example and may she guide our steps to the coming Lord.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, today the Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. This recognition coincides with the United Nations’ Human Rights Day, and this underscores the strong ties between human rights and nuclear disarmament. Indeed, committing oneself to protecting the dignity of all people, in a particular way those who are weakest and most disadvantaged, means also working with determination to build a world without nuclear arms. We have the God-given ability to work together to build our common home: we have the freedom, intelligence and ability to direct technology, to limit our power, at the service of peace and of true progress (cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’*, 78, 112, 202).

The day after tomorrow the “One Planet Summit” will take place in Paris. At two years since the adoption of the Paris Climate Accord, it aims to renew the commitment for its implementation and to consolidate a shared strategy to counter the alarming phenomenon of climate change. I intensely hope that this Summit, as the other initiatives that are aimed in the same direction, may favour a clear awareness of the necessity to adopt truly effective decisions to counter climate change and, at the same time, to combat poverty and promote integral human development.

In this context I would like to express my closeness to the Indian populations who were struck by Cyclone Ockhi, especially the families of the multitude of missing fishermen; and also to the population of Albania, harshly tried by severe flooding.

I address my greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims. In particular to the faithful from Valladolid and Huelva, Spain. I greet the many groups of Italian youth and young people from

Florence, Carugate, Brembate, Almè, Petosino and Pian Camuno: I encourage you all to be joyful witnesses to the Gospel.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday and a good Advent journey, preparing the way for the coming Lord. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*