



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 30 August 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Today's Gospel passage (cf. *Mt* 16:21-27) is linked to that of last Sunday (cf. *Mt* 16:13-20). After Peter, on behalf of the other disciples as well, has professed his faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, Jesus himself begins to speak to them about his Passion. Along the path to Jerusalem, he openly explains to his friends what awaits him at the end in the Holy City: he foretells the mystery of his death and Resurrection, of his humiliation and glory. He says that he will have to "suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (*Mt* 16:21). But his words are not understood, because the disciples have a faith that is still immature and too closely tied to the mentality of this world (cf. *Rom* 12:2). They think of too earthly a victory, and therefore they do not understand the language of the cross.

At the prospect that Jesus may fail and die on the cross, Peter himself rebels and says to Him: "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you!" (v. 22). He believes in Jesus — Peter is like this — he has faith, he believes in Jesus; he believes; he wants to follow him, but does not accept that his glory will pass through the Passion. For Peter and the other disciples — but for us too! — the cross is an uncomfortable thing, the cross is a "hindrance", whereas Jesus considers the "hindrance" escaping the cross, which would mean avoiding the Father's will, the mission that the Father has entrusted to him for our salvation. For this reason Jesus responds to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men" (v. 23). Ten minutes earlier, Jesus had praised Peter. He had promised him he would be the base of his Church, its foundation; ten minutes later he says to him, "Satan". How can this be understood? It happens to us all! In moments of devotion, of fervour, of good will, of closeness to our neighbour, we look to Jesus and we go forward; but in moments in which we approach the cross, we flee. The devil, Satan — as Jesus says to Peter — tempts us. It is typical of the evil spirit, it is typical of the devil to make us stray from the cross, from the cross of Jesus.

Addressing everyone then, Jesus adds: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (v. 24). In this way he indicates the way of the true disciple, showing two attitudes. The first is “to renounce oneself”, which does not mean a superficial change, but a conversion, a reversal of mentality and of values. The other attitude is that of taking up one’s own cross. It is not just a matter of patiently enduring daily tribulations, but of bearing with faith and responsibility that part of toil, and that part of suffering that the struggle against evil entails. The life of Christians is always a struggle. The Bible says that the life of Christians is a military undertaking: fighting against the evil spirit, fighting against Evil.

Thus the task of “taking up the cross” becomes participating with Christ in the salvation of the world. Considering this, let us make sure that the cross hanging on the wall at home, or that little one that we wear around our neck, is a sign of our wish to be united with Christ in lovingly serving our brothers and sisters, especially the littlest and most fragile. The cross is the holy sign of God’s Love, it is a sign of Jesus’ Sacrifice, and is not to be reduced to a superstitious object or an ornamental necklace. Each time we fix our gaze on the image of Christ crucified, let us contemplate that he, as the true Servant of the Lord, has accomplished his mission, giving life, spilling his blood for the pardoning of sins. And let us not allow ourselves to be drawn to the other side by the temptation of the Evil One. Therefore, if we want to be his disciples, we are called to imitate him, expending our life unreservedly out of love of God and neighbour.

May the Virgin Mary, united to her Son unto Calvary, help us not to retreat in the face of the trials and suffering that witnessing to the Gospel entails.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters,

The day after tomorrow, 1st September, is the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. From this date, until 4 October, we will celebrate with our Christian brothers and sisters from various Churches and traditions the “Jubilee for the Earth”, to commemorate the establishment, 50 years ago, of Earth Day. I send my greeting to the various initiatives promoted in every part of the world and, among them, the Concert held today in the Cathedral of Port-Louis, capital of Mauritius, where unfortunately an environmental catastrophe has recently occurred.

I am following with concern the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean area, which is under threat from various outbreaks of instability. I appeal, please, for constructive dialogue and respect for international law in order to resolve the conflicts that threaten the peace of the peoples of that region.

And I greet all of you gathered here today from Rome, Italy and various countries. I see the flags

there, and I greet the Religious Community of East Timor in Italy. Bravo, those of you with flags! The pilgrims from Londrina and Formosa, in Brazil; and the young people of Grantorto, diocese of Vicenza. Welcome! I also see Polish flags, I greet the Polish people; Argentinian flags, also the Argentinians. Welcome to you all!

I wish you all a blessed Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*