

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 171124d

Friday 24.11.2017

Trip of the Substitute of the Secretariat of State to Malaysia for the inauguration of the new Nunciature in Kuala Lumpur

The following is the homily pronounced today by Archbishop Giovanni Angelo Becciu, substitute of the Secretariat of State, during the Holy Mass in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the inauguration of the new Apostolic Nunciature:

Homily of H.E. Msgr. Angelo Becciu

Your Eminence,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Friends,

In today's Gospel passage, our Lord tells Saint Peter that he is the rock on which He will found His Church and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. It is significant that Jesus points to the future: "On this rock I *shall build* my Church" (Mt 16:18). The Church in Malaysia was to become a part of that future. By God's grace, in our own days, the vibrant life of the Christian community in this country is fulfilling the Lord's promise in a wonderful way.

Saint Peter, the "rock" on which our Lord built His Church, was, as we know, an ordinary man, a simple fisherman. Peter knew himself and he protested his own weakness to Jesus. Nor do the Gospels hide it: they speak of his crippling fear in the storm, his refusal to let Christ wash his feet, and his threefold denial of the Lord in the hours before the crucifixion. And yet, knowing Peter well, and seeing into his heart, Jesus chose him to be the first of the Apostles, *princeps Apostolorum*.

Here we see the beauty of God's grace. Jesus makes Peter's weakness a source of strength, a strength clearly

evident after the resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter proclaimed the Gospel fearlessly, in Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome, and ultimately bore the supreme witness to Christ by his martyrdom. In our ministry as Bishops, we too experience the power of God's grace working through our own weakness, as we strive in humility to be a rock for those whom we serve.

In a particular way, you as Bishops in union with Peter's Successor in Rome, are called to be a visible sign of God's rock-like presence in the universal Church and in each of your particular Churches. If there are times when we want to protest our weakness to Christ, as Peter did, we must trust in the Lord's unshakable promise to be with us always, to strengthen us in our mission as heralds of the Gospel and as shepherds of God's faithful people. His promise will never fail.

The building we dedicate today is Peter's house; it symbolizes your unity, and that of your local Churches, with the Holy Father, whose ministry as the Successor of Peter makes him the visible foundation and principle of the Church's unity in faith: *ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*. In the responsorial psalm we sang: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity" (*Ps 133*). Let us pray that this house, and all who work and dwell here, will always be a sign of the Holy Father's ministry of service to our communion in the Catholic Church. May this chapel too, as the heart of the new Nunciature, be a source of spiritual light and strength to the Nuncio and his co-workers in their daily efforts to share with Peter's Successor the challenges as well as the joys experienced by God's People in your respective Dioceses, and to transmit in turn the Holy Father's pastoral concern and encouragement. In this way, the presence of the Nunciature here can contribute to the unity the Bishops enjoy with the Pope, among themselves and with the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the local Churches. It will encourage the entire Catholic community in bearing witness to the Gospel and in spreading, through good works, Christ's merciful love for all mankind.

The psalmist describes the goodness of fraternal unity with the image of fragrant oil flowing down the beard of Aaron and onto his robes. Here we rightly see a prophecy of the Holy Spirit poured out upon the Church, in the richness of his charismatic and hierarchical gifts, for her upbuilding in faith, hope and love. Each of us, by God's grace, has received that gift in abundance, especially on the day of our consecration. May the blessing of this chapel be the occasion of a fresh outpouring of the Spirit's gifts. May the oil of His gladness anoint our lives and strengthen us in holiness and zeal for the apostolate. If at times we feel weak and overwhelmed by the challenges we face, the Spirit reminds us that Christ has built His Church on rock and continues to guide her at every step. Let us strengthen one another in unity and trust in the Lord's promise.

I wish to renew the gratitude of Pope Francis to the entire Bishops' Conference and to all those who have made the building of this Apostolic Nunciature possible. As we know, every home also needs a mother. Let us turn to Mary, Mother of the Church, and ask her intercession, entrusting all our efforts, our people, our hopes and our very selves, to her maternal care. May she guide us to our heavenly homeland in the communion of Christ's body, the Church, and in unity of mind and heart with Peter's Successor in Rome.
