



The Holy See

*Venerable brother Cardinals,
Sisters and brothers in the Lord!*

1. Christ is Risen! With even more emotion in a memorial celebration such as that of the Novendiali, let us sing the Paschal Alleluia, that hymn that is echoed in the voice of the dean, “*Nuncio vobis gaudium magnum quod est Alleluia*”, also in this Basilica, which a few moments before the Vigil was visited by the Holy Father Francis. Unwittingly, we imagine, he was preparing to cross another Red Sea, another night that Christ’s Resurrection allows us to call blessed, the night of which it is said “*et nox sicut dies illuminabitur*”.

In a few days’ time, the Cardinal Protodeacon will use a similar formula, announcing to the Church and the world the *gaudium magnum* of having a new Pope: it is from the Paschal experience of Christ that the ministry of the Successor of Peter draws meaning, called in every time to live the words we have just heard in the Gospel: “Once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers”. Peter confirms his brothers in the faith that the Crucified Jesus is Risen and lives forever. The celebration of the Novendiali for the late Pontiff constitutes on the part of different categories and affiliations a rite of Christian memorial: ideally, even in this way the Successor of Peter summons us to confirm ourselves, precisely because we renew our profession of faith in the resurrection of the flesh, in the forgiveness of sins, even those of a man who has become Pontiff, and in renewing the awareness that the unity of every person’s history is in God’s hands.

2. Today the Cardinal Fathers are called to participate in the Novendiali, almost a central phase in this ecclesial journey, gathering together in prayer as Collegium and entrusting to the Lord the one whose first collaborators and advisors they have been, or at least have tried to be, in the Roman Curia as well as in the dioceses throughout the world. Ideally, however, each one of us, venerable brothers, brings with him the people for whom he is called to live his service: from Tonga with the Islands of the Pacific, to the steppes of Mongolia; from ancient Persia with Teheran to the place where the proclamation of salvation originated, Jerusalem; from the places once flourishing with Christianity and now the home of a small flock, in some cases marked by martyrdom, such as Morocco and Algeria, just to name some of the geographical coordinates the Holy Father wished to outline over the years, convoking frequent Consistories. In all these places and continents, as in the connecting spaces of the Secretariat of State and Roman Curia, as successors of the Apostles

we are called every day to remember to live in the knowledge that “to reign is to serve”, like the Master and Lord, who is in our midst as he who serves.

3. Indeed, one of the titles that tradition attributes to the Bishop of Rome is that of *Servus Servorum Dei*, beloved by Saint Gregory the Great ever since he was just a deacon, to recall this abiding truth: the liturgy reminds us of it in external signs, when in the most solemn celebrations we wear the tunic underneath the chasuble, a reminder of our always having to remain deacons, that is, servants. Pope Francis lived this, choosing various places of suffering and loneliness to perform the washing of the feet during the Holy Mass in Coena Domini, but also kneeling and kissing the feet of the leaders of South Sudan, imploring the gift of peace, with that same style considered by many to be scandalous, but powerfully evangelical, with which [Paul VI](#), on 4 December fifty years ago in the Sistine Chapel, knelt to kiss the feet of Meliton, Metropolitan of Chalcedon. The Church tradition, dear brother Cardinals, divides us into three orders: bishops, presbyters and deacons, but we are all nevertheless called to serve, bearing witness to the Gospel *usque ad effusionem sanguinis*, as we swore on the day we were created cardinals and is signified by the scarlet we wear, offering ourselves, collegially and as individuals, as the first collaborators of the Successor of the blessed Apostle Peter.

4. The first letter, taken from the book of the Acts of the Apostles, takes us just outside the Upper Room in Jerusalem, where the Jews from every nation under heaven are gathered. It is Peter who takes the floor to justify what had happened: the apostles are not drunk and do not speak too much, on the contrary, precisely because they are pervaded by that *sobria ebrietas* of the Spirit, as it will be called later in patristic literature, they can be understood even by different peoples, each in his own language. It is significant that this reading is chosen in the Novendiali: certainly, it refers to the Apostle Peter, since it is his first speech, but the context is that of the Pentecost that has just taken place. The temporal reference that Luke gives is “*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled*”. What does this fulfilment mean? It is both a coming to an end and at the same time a coming to fullness, and thus a new beginning. The Evangelist uses here the same verb that he had used in chapter 9 of the Gospel, when after the Transfiguration, coming down from the mountain, “when the days for his being taken up were fulfilled”, Jesus hardened his countenance as he headed towards Jerusalem, where the scriptures concerning him would be fulfilled, as he later reminded the lost disciples on the road to Emmaus. After the peak of the Transfiguration, the journey towards the fulfilment of the prophecies at Passover in Jerusalem; after Passover the expectation of the Spirit at Pentecost, with the fullness of the gift of the Spirit the beginning of the Church. We are living the passage between the conclusion of the life of the Successor of Peter, Pope Francis, and the fulfilment of the promise that with the new effusion of the Spirit, Christ’s Church may continue her journey among men with a new Pastor. But which prophecy is fulfilled at Pentecost? The one that the liturgical pericope omitted but which was so dear and so much quoted by Pope Francis, contained in the third chapter of Joel: “*I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions... Then everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will escape harm*”. Our dear

Holy Father liked to repeat it to speak about the encounter and dialogue between the generations, about the need for the elderly to tell the young about their dreams, and at the same time for the young with their energy and vision to be able, with God's help, to translate them into reality. *"There is no future without this encounter between the old and the young. There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds. There is never prophecy without memory, or memory without prophecy. And constant encounter"*. Somehow Pope Francis also leaves this word to the College of Cardinals, made up of younger and older men, in which all can let themselves be taught by God, sense the dream he has for his Church, and try to fulfil it with youth and renewed enthusiasm.

5. In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee, Pope Francis indicated a vision, a dream for which we must prepare, and which will be entrusted to the new Pontiff: *"The Holy Year will also guide our steps towards yet another fundamental celebration for all Christians: 2033 will mark the two thousandth anniversary of the redemption won by the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We are about to make a pilgrimage marked by great events, in which the grace of God precedes and accompanies his people as they press forward firm in faith, active in charity and steadfast in hope (cf. 1 Thess 1:3). Spiritually we will all be pilgrims on the roads to the Holy Land, to Jerusalem, to proclaim to the world from the Holy Sepulchre – hoping to be able to do so with all the brothers and sisters that a single baptism has consecrated – "The Lord is truly risen and has appeared to Simon!"*

6. Lord, we entrust to you your servant, Pope Francis, that you may now fill him with joy in your presence, and we ask the grace to fulfil his vision for a Church that proclaims the mystery of Christ, Crucified and Risen! Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, intercede with your prayers for the one who so willingly fixed your loving gaze, and now rests in the Basilica dedicated to you.

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 30 April 2025