



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 26 September 2021

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's Liturgy recounts a brief dialogue between Jesus and the Apostle John, who speaks on behalf of the entire group of disciples. They saw a man who was casting out demons in the name of the Lord, but they stopped him because he was not part of their group. At this point, Jesus invited them not to hinder those who do good, because they contribute to the fulfilment of God's plan (cf. Mk 9:38-41). Then he admonished them: instead of dividing people into good and bad, we are all called to be vigilant over our own hearts, lest we succumb to evil and bring scandal to others (cf. vv. 42-45, 47-48).

In short, Jesus' words reveal a *temptation*, and offer an *exhortation*. The temptation is to be "closed off". The disciples would like to hinder a good deed simply because it is performed by someone who does not belong to their group. They think they have the "exclusive right over Jesus", and that they are the only ones authorised to work for the Kingdom of God. But this way, they end up feeling that they are privileged and consider others as outsiders, to the extent of becoming hostile towards them. Brothers and sisters, every closure tends in fact to keep us at a distance from those who do not think like we do, and this — we know — is the root of many great evils in history: of absolutism that has often generated dictatorships and of great violence towards those who are different.

But we need to be vigilant about closure in the Church too. Because the devil, who is the divider

— this is what the word “devil” means, the one who divides — always insinuates suspicions to divide and exclude people. He tempts by using cunning, and it can happen as with those disciples, who ended up excluding even someone who had cast out the devil himself! Sometimes we too, instead of being humble and open communities, can give the impression of being the “top of the class” and keep others at a distance; instead of trying to walk with everyone, we can show off our “believer’s license”: “I am a believer”, “I am Catholic”, “I belong to this association, to that one”, and the others, poor things, do not. This is a sin. Showing off one’s “believer’s license” to judge and exclude. Let us ask for the grace to overcome the temptation to judge and to categorise, and may God preserve us from the “nest” mentality, that of jealously guarding ourselves in the small group of those who consider themselves good: the priest with his loyal followers, the pastoral workers closed off among themselves so that no one can infiltrate, the movements and associations in their own particular charism, and so on. Closed. All this runs the risk of turning Christian communities into places of separation and not of communion. The Holy Spirit does not want closure; He wants openness, welcoming communities where there is a place for everyone.

And then in the Gospel there is Jesus’ *exhortation* : instead of judging everything and everyone, let us be attentive to ourselves! Indeed, the risk is to be inflexible towards others and indulgent towards ourselves. And Jesus urges us not to make a deal with evil, with striking images: “If something in you causes you to sin, cut it off!” (cf. vv. 43-48). If something harms you, cut it off! He does not say, “If something is a reason for scandal, stop, think about it, improve a bit...”. No: “Cut it off! Immediately! Jesus is radical in this, demanding, but for our own good, like a good doctor. Every cut, every pruning, is so we can grow better and bear fruit in love.

Let us then ask ourselves: what is in me that is contrary to the Gospel? What, in concrete terms, does Jesus want me to cut out of my life?

Let us pray to the Immaculate Virgin, that she may help us be welcoming towards others and vigilant over ourselves.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, today we are celebrating World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which this year is on the theme: “Towards an ever wider we”. It is necessary to walk together, without prejudice and without fear, beside those who are most vulnerable: migrants, refugees, displaced persons, victims of human trafficking, and the abandoned. We are called to build an ever more inclusive world, that excludes no one.

I join with those, who are celebrating this Day in various parts of the world; I greet the faithful gathered in Loreto for the initiative of the Italian Episcopal Conference in aid of migrants and

refugees. I greet and thank the various ethnic communities present here in the Square with their flags; and I greet the representatives of the Italian *Caritas* “apri ” project, as well as the *Migrantes* Office of the Diocese of Rome and the *Centro Astalli*. Thank you all for your generous efforts!

And before leaving the Square, I invite you to go over to the monument over there — where Cardinal Czerny is — the boat with the migrants, and to look closely at the expressions of those people and grasp in that look the hope that every migrant has, to start living again. Go over there and look at that monument. Let us not close the doors to their hope.

I express my closeness and solidarity to those who were affected by the eruption of the volcano on the island of La Palma, in the Canaries. I think in particular of those who were forced to leave their homes. Let us pray to Our Lady, venerated on that island as *Nuestra Señora de las Nieves*, for these people who have been sorely tried, and for the rescuers.

Today, Fr Giovanni Fornasini, priest and martyr, will be beatified. A parish priest zealous in charity, he did not abandon his flock during the tragic period of the Second World War, but rather he defended it to the point of bloodshed. May his heroic witness help us to face life’s trials with fortitude. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

And I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from various countries. In particular, I greet the *Opera Don Orione* lay movement and the representation of parents and young people joined in the fight against tumours.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday. And please, please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci* !