



# The Holy See

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EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY POPE FRANCIS JUBILEE AUDIENCE St Peter's Square  
Saturday, 22 October 2016 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

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## Mercy and dialogue

*Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!*

The passage of John's Gospel that we heard (cf. 4:6-15) recounts Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman. What is striking about this encounter is the very succinct *dialogue* between the woman and Jesus. This allows us today to underline a very important aspect of mercy, which is *dialogue*.

Dialogue allows people to know and understand one another's needs. Above all, it is a sign of great respect, because it puts the person into a stance of listening, and into a condition of being receptive to the speaker's best viewpoints. Secondly, dialogue is an expression of charity because, while not ignoring differences, it can help us investigate and share the common good. Moreover, dialogue invites us to place ourselves before the other, seeing him or her as a gift of God, and as someone who calls upon us and asks to be acknowledged.

Many times, we do not encounter our brothers and sisters, even when living beside them, especially when we give precedence to our position over that of the other. We do not dialogue when we do not listen well enough, or when we tend to interrupt the other person in order to show that we are right. However, how many times, how many times as we are listening to a person, do we stop them and say: "No! No! It isn't so!", and we do not allow the person to finish explaining what they want to say. And this hinders dialogue: this is aggression. True dialogue, instead, requires moments of silence in which to understand the extraordinary gift of God's presence in a brother or sister.

Dear brothers and sisters, dialogue helps people to humanize relationships and to overcome misunderstandings. There is great need for dialogue in our families, and how much more easily issues would be resolved if we learned to listen to each other! This is how it is in the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children. How much help can also come through dialogue between teachers and their pupils; or between managers and workers, in order to identify

the most important demands of the work.

The Church, too, lives by dialoguing with men and women of every era, in order to understand the needs that are in the heart of every person, and to contribute to the fulfillment of the common good. Let us think of the great gift of creation, and the responsibility we all have of safeguarding our common home: dialogue on such a central theme is an unavoidable necessity. Let us think of dialogue among religions in order to discover the profound truth of their mission in the midst of men and women, and to contribute to the building of peace and of a network of respect and fraternity (cf. Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, n. 201).

To conclude, all forms of dialogue are expressions of our great need for the love of God, who reaches out to everyone, and places in everyone a seed of his goodness, so that it may cooperate in his creative work. Dialogue breaks down the walls of division and misunderstandings: it builds bridges of communication, and it does not allow anyone to isolate themselves, or withdraw into their own little world. Do not forget: dialogue means listening to what the other tells me, and saying what I think, with kindness. If things proceed in this way, the family, the neighbourhood, the workplace will be better. However, if I do not allow the other to say everything that is in his heart, and I begin to shout — today we shout a lot — this relationship between us will not thrive; the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, will not thrive. Listen, explain, with kindness; do not bark at the other, do not shout, but have an open heart.

Jesus understood well what was in the heart of the Samaritan woman, who was a great sinner: nonetheless, he did not deny her the opportunity to explain herself; he allowed her to speak to the end, and entered little by little into the mystery of her life. This lesson also applies to us. Through dialogue, we can make the signs of God's mercy grow, and make them an instrument of welcome and respect.

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### **Special greetings:**

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from England, Scotland, Indonesia, Malaysia and the United States of America. With prayerful good wishes that the Jubilee of Mercy will be a moment of grace and spiritual renewal for you and your families, I invoke upon all of you joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.