The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE DIOCESES OF
CAMPOBASSO-BOIANO
AND
ISERNIA-VENAFRO

MEETING WITH ALL THE CITIZENS AND
PROCLAMATION OF THE CELESTINE JUBILEE YEAR

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Piazza della Cattedrale (Isernia)
Saturday, 5 July 2014

Video

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your warm welcome! I thank Bishop Camillo Cibotti, the new Bishop of Isernia, and his predecessor, Archbishop Salvatore Visco of Capua, the Mayor, distinguished Authorities and all those who cooperated for the success of this visit. This is today's last encounter, and it takes place in a symbolic place: the Square of the Cathedral. The *square* is the place where we meet as citizens, and the *cathedral* is the place where we meet with God, we listen to his Word, to live as brothers, citizens and brothers. In Christianity there is no contrast between sacred and profane, in this sense: citizens and brothers.

There is a remarkable idea that struck me, on thinking about the legacy of St Celestine V, who, like St Francis of Assisi, had a really powerful sense of God's mercy, and of the fact that *the mercy of God renews the world*.

Peter of Morrone, like Francis of Assisi, knew well the society of his time, with its great poverty. They were very close to the people. They had the same compassion Jesus had toward so many

weary and oppressed people; but they did not limit themselves to offering good advice, or sympathetic consolation. First of all they chose a life that went against the current, they chose to entrust themselves to the Providence of the Father, not only as a personal ascesis, but as prophetic witnesses to a Paternity and to fraternity, which is the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And it always strikes me that with their powerful compassion for the people, these Saints felt the need to *give the people the greatest thing*, the greatest wealth: *the Father's mercy*, forgiveness. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us". In these words from the *Our Father*, there is a plan for life, based on mercy. Mercy, kindness, forgiveness of debts, is not only a thing of devotion, of intimacy, of spiritual healing, a sort of oil which helps us be kinder, better, no. It is *the prophecy of a new world*: mercy is the prophecy of a new world, in which the goods of the earth and of work are equally distributed and no one lacks the necessary, because solidarity and sharing are the concrete result of fraternity. These two Saints set the example. They knew that, as clergy — one was a deacon, the other a bishop, the Bishop of Rome — as clergy, both had to set the example of poverty, of mercy and of totally divesting themselves.

This then is the sense of a new citizenship, which we feel powerfully here, in this Square in front of the Cathedral, where the memory of St Peter of Morrone, Celestine V, speaks to us.

Here is the truly modern sense of the Jubilee Year, this Celestine Jubilee Year, which I proclaim open from this moment, and during which the door of divine mercy will stand wide open to everyone. It is not an escape, not an avoidance of realty and of one's problems, it is the answer that comes from the Gospel: *love as a force of purification*, of integrity, a force *of renewal* of social relationships, a force *of planning* for a different economy, which places the person, work and family at the centre rather than money and profit.

We are all aware that this is not the way of the world; we are not dreamers, mistaken, nor do we want to create an out-of-this-world oasis. We believe rather that *this is the good path for all*, it is the path that truly brings us close to justice and peace. But we also know that we are sinners, that we are always tempted at first not to follow this path and to conform to the world's mentality, to the mentality of power, to the mentality of wealth. This is why we entrust ourselves to God's mercy, and we commit ourselves to carrying out with his grace the fruit of conversion and works of mercy. These two things: to convert oneself and perform works of mercy. This is the driving force of this year this Celestine Jubilee Year. May we always be accompanied and sustained on this journey by the Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy.

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