

Pope Francis: Charity is the 'greatest richness' of Church

Vatican City, Nov 6, 2013 - During his general audience today, Pope Francis reflected on the importance of participating in the Church's spiritual goods in order to grow closer to God as a community in charity.

"Charity is the greatest richness of the Church. Living Communion in charity means not looking for one's own interest, but rather to be capable of sharing the joys and sufferings of brethren; to be capable of carrying one another's burdens," the Pope explained in his Nov. 6 General Audience.

The Holy Father addressed his words to the thousands of pilgrims crowded into Saint Peter's Square earlier this morning.

"Dear Brothers and Sisters," he began, "In our continuing catechesis on the Creed, we now reflect on 'the communion of saints' as a communion not only of persons but also of spiritual goods."

We grow in communion with God and with the other members of his body "through our sharing" in those spiritual goods, noted the Pope, naming the Sacraments, charisms and charity as three of the key "treasures" found within the Church.

"In the Sacraments we find ourselves with Jesus and, through Him, we enter to form part of the holy People of God," the pontiff explained.

"All encounters with the Lord have a missionary character," and "that is why, the Sacraments are an invitation to communicate to others what we have seen and heard, to lead others to the salvation we have received," he continued.

In the same way, the Pope specified that charisms "are special gifts and graces that the Holy Spirit distributes to build up the Church, namely, to build up its holiness and its mission in the world" through "unity" and "service."

A charism denotes different gifts and spiritual graces given to man through the love of God in order to complete their specific mission or task within the Church.

These charisms "enrich charity, which is above everything, expressed the Pope, "without love, charisms are in vain. With love, even the smallest of our actions have repercussions in benefitting everyone."

Pope Francis concluded his reflections by urging those present not to forget that "the spiritual goods that we share in the Church are in the service of the Communion and of the mission and through the Communion of the saints each one of us are a sign and 'sacrament' of God's love for the others and for the entire world."



Christmas Begins with Jesus

10 Things you Can Do to Keep Christ in Christmas

1. Send Christmas cards/e-cards with spiritual messages and/or the nativity scene.
2. Invite a non-Catholic friend to attend midnight mass with you.
3. Send a compliment email to businesses that put "Christmas" greetings in their stores to tell them how much you appreciate them keeping "Christmas" in their stores.
4. Say "Merry Christmas" instead of of "Happy Holidays". If you are worried you may offend someone, say both greetings.
5. If you have a party at your house, invite your guests to watch a Christmas-themed DVD with you, e.g. The Nativity Story.
6. Play Christmas music that has a religious message, e.g. Silent Night, Joy to the World, instead of secular ones.
7. Plan a project of good will, e.g. adopt a family or volunteer at a food bank, and invite your colleagues and friends to join you. Tell them you do this because it is "Christmas".
8. Write "Christmas" instead of "X'mas" to clearly show there is "Christ" in "Christmas".
9. Prepare yourself for Christmas during Advent. Go to confession before Christmas.
10. Set up a nativity scene in your home and decorate your Christmas tree with religious decorations, such as angels and stars.



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福傳快訊

11月13日

教宗方濟各：天主所賜的神恩在愛德中與教會結合

(梵蒂岡電台訊) 教宗方濟各 11 月 6 日上午在梵蒂岡聖伯多祿廣場主持了周三公開接見活動。他在秋季溫和的陽光下，為大約 8 萬名來自世界各地的朝聖人士講授了一篇要理，主題是：“神聖財富的相通”：聖事的共融、神恩的共融和愛德的共融。

教宗首先談到“聖事的共融”說：“聖事不是表面功夫，不是儀式；聖事是基督的力量，在聖事中有耶穌基督。當我們舉行彌撒時，在感恩聖事中有生活的耶穌，正是他召集我們，使我們成為團體，讓我們朝拜天父。”

聖事推動我們去宣講，讓我們驚嘆天主的美妙化工，豎起阻擋塵世偶像的堤壩。教宗進一步解釋聖事在信仰生活上的重要性說：“為此，領聖體很重要；兒童盡早領洗很重要；領受堅振聖事很重要。為什麼？因為耶穌基督臨在我們內，幫助我們。重要的是，當我們感到自己是罪人時，就要去領修和聖事。”

說到這裡，教宗舉例說，有人會說：“不，神父，我不去，我害怕，因為神父會訓斥我。”教宗回答說：“不會的，神父不會訓斥你。你知道在修和聖事中會遇到誰？會遇到耶穌，寬恕你的耶穌。在那裡等待你的是耶穌，這就是聖事。聖事使整個教會成長。”

接着，教宗講解第二件神聖財富：“神恩的共融”。教宗提到“神恩”這兩個字不容易懂，他這樣解釋說：“神恩是聖神賜予我們的禮物。禮物是賜予的，但是賜予我們這些禮物，不是叫我們把它們藏起來，而是叫我們與他人共享。禮物並非為接收人的益處，而是為天主子民的好處。若一個神恩，一件禮物僅用來肯定自己，那麼它是不是真正的神恩或我們是否忠實地活出這個神恩，就值得懷疑了。”

教宗強調，換句話說，神恩應使教會及其使命受益，應被接納，却不消滅神恩。由此，教宗的要理講授引入第三個神聖財富的共融：“愛德的共融”。教宗稱神恩在基督信仰團體中固然重要，但它們始終是使人在愛德中成長的途徑，用聖保祿的話：“愛超越一切”（參閱格前 13: 1-13）。

教宗說：“若沒有愛，一切恩典為教會毫無益處，因為那裡缺少愛，那裡就有空虛，空虛便被自私填滿。”於是，他問廣場上的信友們：“若我們大家都自私，僅是自私的人，我們在團體中能過平安的日子嗎？若我們每個人都自私，能和平相處嗎？”

最後，教宗提到我們經常過於無情、冷淡、不關心人，不僅不傳遞友愛，反而散佈不和。為此，教宗指出需要讓愛將我們聚合在一起，讓我們用愛所做的最微小行動，給眾人帶來益處。



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耶穌降世，聖誕真諦 宣揚聖誕十大行動



1. 給親友送上有宗教訊息或有耶穌誕生故事的聖誕咭。
2. 邀請一位非天主教的朋友與你一同參與子夜彌撒。
3. 給在店裡或廣告中用上"Christmas"賀詞的商戶寄一封電郵，表達謝意，以鼓勵他們以後繼續在店舖內宣揚聖誕的訊息。
4. 跟人說 "Merry Christmas" 而非 "Happy Holidays"。若你擔心會冒犯有別人，可以同時用上兩句賀詞。禮多人不怪嘛！
5. 在家中舉行聖誕派對時，可邀請來賓一同欣賞以耶穌誕生故事作為主題的電影，例如：The Nativity Story。
6. 盡量多些播放具宗教訊息的聖誕歌如《平安夜》、《普世歡騰》等，而非一般聖誕歌曲。
7. 策劃一次有意義的活動，如給有需要的家庭送上禮物、在食物賙濟庫當義工等，並邀請你的同事及朋友一起參加，向他們解釋活動的目的是要在聖誕臨近時多做善事。
8. 習慣寫 "Christmas" 而非 "X'mas"，讓人更清楚見到基督才是聖誕的中心。
9. 在將臨期辦妥修和聖事，為迎接聖誕作好心靈上的準備。
10. 在家中佈置一個馬槽，亦可在聖誕樹掛上具宗教意味的裝飾，如天使、星星等。



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