



VATICAN RADIO'S ENGLISH SERVICE FOR SOUTH ASIA

# Weekday Homilies of Pope Francis

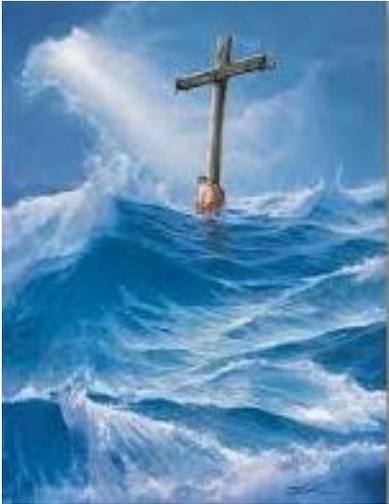
September 9 to 21,  
2013

....at the Chapel of Casa di  
Santa Martha at 7 a.m.



## Christian hope is Jesus personified

The virtue of hope, perhaps less understood than those of faith and charity, should never be confused with human optimism which is more a state of mind. **For a Christian, hope is Jesus personified in the Eucharist and in the Word.** That's the essence of what Pope Francis said at Mass on **Monday, September 9.**



Hope is a gift from Jesus; hope is Jesus himself and bears his name. But it's not the kind of hope that you find in a person who usually looks at "a half full glass" – that's simply "optimism" and "optimism is a human attitude that depends on many things."

Recalling the Gospel reading in which Jesus heals a man with a paralyzed hand and is criticized by the scribes and Pharisees, Pope Francis observed that through his miracle, Jesus shows them how theirs "is not the way of liberty. Liberty and hope go together: where there is no hope, there can be no liberty. And, with that gesture, Jesus shows us the power of renewal through Him.

Jesus, hope, renews everything. He's a constant miracle. Christ embodies this miracle of renewal in the Church, in my life, your life, in our life. Christ is the reason for our hope, and this hope does not delude. It's a little sad when one finds a priest without hope, it is beautiful to find one who arrives at the end of life not with optimism, but with hope. This priest, he continued, is linked to Jesus Christ and the people of God need priests to give them this sign of hope, living this hope in Jesus who renews all.

Pope Francis finally pointed to the Madonna's great hope in her son, as an example for all to follow. "Even in her darkest hour, she had that hope: She had it. It's that hope that renews all."

[\(VIDEO\)](#)



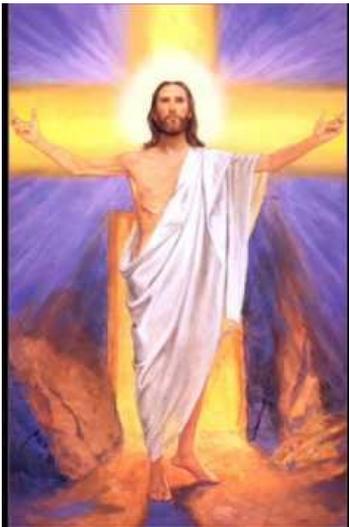
## No to triumphalism in the Church, proclaim Jesus without fear and embarrassment

Christians are called to proclaim Jesus without fear, without shame and without triumphalism. Those were the words of Pope Francis at Mass this **Tuesday, September 10.** The Pope also stressed the risk of becoming a Christian without the Resurrection and reiterated that Christ is always at the center of our life and hope.

"Jesus is the Winner who has won over sin and death. Pope Francis was referring to the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians in which the Saint recommends we walk with Jesus "because he has won, and we walk with him in his victory "firm in the faith."

This is the key point: Jesus has risen. But, it is not always easy to understand. When St. Paul spoke to the Greeks in Athens he was listened to with interest up to the point when he spoke of the resurrection. "This makes us afraid, it best to leave it as is."

The Apostles, who closed themselves up in the Upper Room for fear of the Jews, even Mary Magdalene who was weeping because they have taken away the Lord's Body." ...were afraid to think about the Resurrection. There are also the Christians who are embarrassed. They are embarrassed to confess that Christ is risen!



Finally, there is the group of Christians who in their hearts do not believe in the Risen Lord and want to make theirs a more majestic resurrection than that of the real one. These, are the 'triumphalist' Christians. They do not know the meaning of the word 'triumph'. So they just say "triumphalism", because they have such an inferiority complex and want to do this ...

When we look at these Christians, with their many triumphalist attitudes in their lives, in their speeches and in their pastoral theology, liturgy, so many things, it is because they do not believe deep down in the Risen One. He is the Winner, the Risen One. He won.

"This, the Holy Father added, is the message that Paul gives to us 'Christ' is everything, he is totality and hope, because he is the Bridegroom , the Winner. [\(VIDEO\)](#)

## **Pope Francis: contemplate the “suffering humanity” of Jesus and the sweetness of Mary**

In order to live the message of the Gospel, a Christian must contemplate the 'two poles' of the 'suffering humanity' of Jesus and the 'sweetness' of Mary. That was Pope Francis' message in his homily **Thursday September 12, Feast of the Holy name of Mary.**

The Gospel, is demanding, It requires strong things from a Christian. The ability to forgive, magnanimity, love for enemies... There is only one way to be able to put it into practice: to contemplate the Passion, the humanity of Jesus and to imitate the behaviour of His Mother. It is precisely to Mary, whose Holy Name was celebrated in the day's Feast, that the Pope dedicated the first part of his homily. At one time, today's feast was known as the feast of the "Sweet Name of Mary." Later this title was changed, but in the prayer, this "sweetness of her name" remains.



Even today, we stand in need of this sweetness of the Madonna, in order to understand the things that Jesus requests of us, no? Because this list [of things] is not easy to live. Love the enemy, do good, lend without hoping for anything... to those who strike you on the cheek, offer the other; to those who rip your cloak, don't refuse the tunic... But these are tough things, no? But the Madonna, in her own way, lived all these things: it is the grace of meekness, the grace of mildness.

Saint Paul, too, in the letter to the Colossians in the day's liturgy, invites Christians to "put on . . . heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness . . . bearing with one another and forgiving one another." And here, we immediately ask, "But how can I do this? How can I prepare myself to do this? What must I learn in order to do this?" The

answer, is clear: “We cannot do this with our own effort. We cannot do this! Only grace can accomplish this in us.” And this grace, comes along a definite path.

Fix your thoughts on Jesus alone. If our heart, if our mind is with Jesus, the Victor who has conquered death, sin, the devil, all things, we can do what Jesus Himself asks of us, and what the Apostle asks of us: meekness, humility, kindness, heartfelt compassion, gentleness, magnanimity. If we do not look to Jesus, if we are not with Jesus, we cannot do this. It is a grace: it is the grace that comes from the contemplation of Jesus.”



In particular, there is a specific aspect of the life of Jesus to which the Christian’s contemplation must always return: His Passion, His ‘suffering humanity.’ And, it is through this contemplation of Jesus, of our life hidden with Jesus in God, that we are able to go forward with this attitude, these virtues that the Lord asks of us. There is no other path”.

To think about His meek silence: this will be your endeavour. He will do the rest. He will do everything that is lacking. But you must do that: hiding your life in God with Christ. This is done through contemplation of the humanity of Jesus, of the suffering humanity. There is no other path – there’s none. It is the only way. To be good Christians, contemplating the humanity of Jesus, the suffering humanity. In order to witness, in order to be able to give this witness. In order not to hate the neighbour, contemplate Jesus suffering. To not gossip against the neighbour, contemplate Jesus suffering. It is the only way. Hide your life with Christ in God: this is the counsel the Apostle gives. It is the counsel to become humble, meek and good, magnanimous, kind.” [\(VIDEO\)](#)

## There is no such thing as innocent gossip



“He who speaks ill of his neighbor is a hypocrite who lacks the courage to look to his own shortcomings.” Speaking during his homily at Mass on **Friday September 13**, Pope Francis focused on the fact that gossip has a ‘criminal’ side to it, because every time we speak ill of our brothers, we imitate Cain’s homicidal gesture.

The main point of Pope Francis’ homily on Friday was Jesus’s thought provoking query when he asked: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay

no attention to the plank in your own eye?” After having spoken about humility Jesus speaks to us of its opposite: “of that hateful attitude towards one’s neighbor when one becomes a ‘judge’ of his brother”. In this context Jesus uses a strong word: ‘hypocrite’.

Those who live judging their neighbor, speaking ill of their neighbor, are hypocrites, because they lack the strength and the courage to look to their own shortcomings. The Lord does not waste many words on this concept. Further on he says that he who has hatred in his heart for his brother is a murderer. In his first letter, John the Apostle also says it clearly, “anyone who has hatred for his brother is a murderer, he walks in darkness, he who judges his brother walks in darkness”. And so every time we judge our brothers in our hearts, or worse still when we speak ill of them with others, we are Christian murderers. **A Christian murderer.... It's not me saying this, it's the Lord.** And there is no place for nuances. **If you speak ill of your brother, you kill your brother.** And every time we do this, we are imitating that gesture of Cain, the first murderer in History.

In this time in history when there is much talk of war and so many pleas for peace, a gesture of conversion on our own behalf is necessary. Gossip always has a criminal side to it. There is no such thing as innocent gossip. To quote St. James the Apostle, the tongue is to be used to praise God, **but when we use our tongue to speak ill of our brother or sister, we are using it to kill God**, the image of God in our brother. Some may say that there are persons who deserve being gossiped about. But it is not so.

Go and pray for him! Go and do penance for her! And then, if it is necessary, speak to that person who may be able to seek remedy for the problem. But don't tell everyone! Paul had been a sinner, and he says of himself: “I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man. But I have been mercifully treated.” Perhaps none of us are blasphemers – perhaps... But if we ever gossip we are certainly persecutors and violent. We ask for grace so that we and the entire Church may convert from the crime of gossip to love, to humility, to meekness, to docility, to the generosity of love towards our neighbor”. **(VIDEO)**



## Approach mystery of the Cross with prayer and tears

At the Mass for the **Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Saturday, September 14**, Pope Francis said the mystery of the Cross is a great mystery for mankind, **a mystery that can only be approached in prayer and in tears**. In his homily, the Pope said that it is in the mystery of the Cross that we find the story of mankind and the story of God, synthesised by the Fathers of the Church in the comparison between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in Paradise, and the tree of the Cross.



The one tree has wrought so much evil, the other tree has brought us to salvation, to health. This is the course of the humanity's story: a journey to find Jesus Christ the Redeemer, who gives His life for love. God, in fact, has not sent the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. This tree of the Cross save us, all of us, from the consequences of that other tree, where self-sufficiency, arrogance, the pride of us wanting to know all things according to our own mentality, according to our own criteria, and also

according to that presumption of being and becoming the only judges of the world. This is the story of mankind: from one tree to the other.

In the Cross there is the story of God, because we can say that God has a story. In fact, He has chosen to take up our story and to journey with us, becoming man, assuming the condition of a slave and making Himself obedient even to death on a Cross.

God takes this course for love! There's no other explanation: love alone does this. Today we look upon the Cross, the story of mankind and the story of God. We look upon this Cross, where you can try that honey of aloe, that bitter honey, that bitter sweetness of the sacrifice of Jesus. But this mystery is so great, and we cannot by ourselves look well upon this mystery, not so much to understand – yes, to understand – but to feel deeply the salvation of this mystery. First of all the mystery of the Cross. It can only be understood, a little bit, by kneeling, in prayer, but also through tears: they are the tears that bring us close to this mystery.



Without weeping, heartfelt weeping, we can never understand this mystery. It is the cry of the penitent, the cry of the brother and the sister who are looking upon so much human misery and looking on Jesus, but kneeling and weeping and never alone, never alone!

In order to enter into this mystery, which is not a labyrinth but resembles one a little bit, we need the Mother, the mother's hand. That she, Mary, will make us understand how great and humble this mystery is; how sweet as honey and how bitter as aloe. That she will be the one who accompanies us on this journey, which no one can take if not ourselves. Each one of us must take it! With the mother, weeping and on our knees. [\(VIDEO\)](#)

## Pope Francis: Christians must pray for their leaders

Humility and love are indispensable traits of those who govern, while citizens, especially if they are Catholic, cannot be indifferent to politics. That was Pope Francis' message **Monday, September 16**, as he called for prayers for those in authority.



The Gospel of the centurion who, with humility and confidence, asks for the healing of his servant; and the letter of Saint Paul to Timothy with the invitation to pray for those who govern, inspired the Pope to reflect on the service of authority. **“Those who govern, have to love their people, because a leader who doesn't love, cannot govern – at best they can discipline, they can give a little bit of order, but they can't govern. Consider David, how he loved his people, so much that after the sin of the census he asked the Lord**

not to punish the people, but [to punish] him. These, then, are the two virtues of a leader: love for the people and humility.

You can't govern without loving the people and without humility! And every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: 'Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path. If you don't ask those questions, your governance will not be good. The man or woman who governs – who loves his people is a humble man or woman.

From another point of view, Saint Paul exhorts those who are governed to lift up prayers for those who have authority, so that they might be able to lead a calm and peaceful life. **Citizens cannot be**

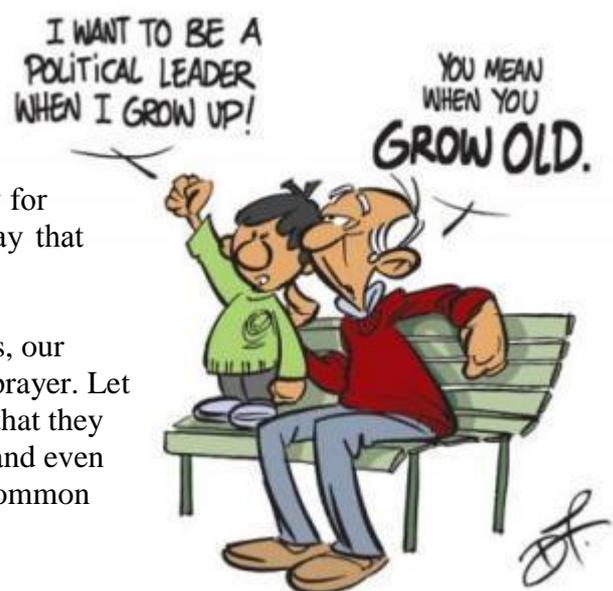
**indifferent to politics: None of us can say, 'I have nothing to do with this, they govern. . . .' No, no, I am responsible for their governance, and I have to do the best so that they govern well, and I have to do my best by participating in politics according to my ability.** Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good. I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!"



There is a tendency, to only speak ill of leaders, and to mutter about things that don't go well. You listen to the television and they're beating [them] up, beating [them] up; you read the papers and their beating [them] up. . . .Yes, maybe the leader is a sinner, as David was, but I have to work with my opinions, with my words, even with my corrections, because we all have to participate for the common good. It is not true that Catholics should not meddle in politics.

**'A good Catholic doesn't meddle in politics.'** **That's not true. That is not a good path.** A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern. But what is the best that we can offer to those who govern? Prayer! That's what Paul says: "Pray for all people, and for the king and for all in authority." But Father, that person is wicked, he should go to hell. . . ." Pray for him, pray for her, that they can govern well, that they can love their people, that they can serve their people, that they can be humble." A Christian who does not pray for those who govern is not a good Christian! "But Father, how will I pray for that person, a person who has problems. . . ." "Pray that that person might convert!"

So, the Pope concluded, we give the best of ourselves, our ideas, suggestions, the best, but above all the best is prayer. Let us pray for our leaders, that they might govern well, that they might advance our homeland, might lead our nation and even our world forward, for the sake of peace and of the common good. [\(VIDEO\)](#)



## Reflecting on our Mother Church...

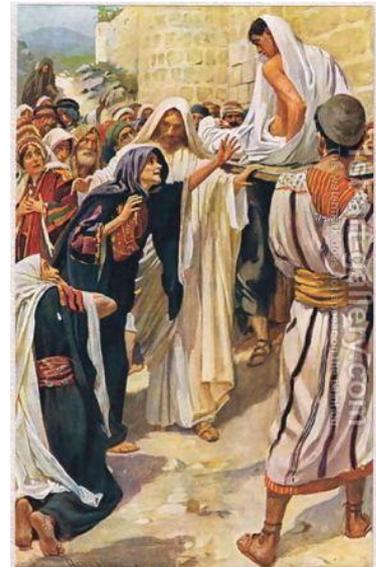
The Church has the courage of a woman who defends her children, in order to bring them to encounter her Spouse. This was one of the main focal points of Pope Francis' remarks following the readings at Mass on **Tuesday September 17**. The Pope also reflected on the encounter between Jesus and the widow of Naim, saying that the Church herself is, in history, walking in search of her Lord.



Jesus has the capacity to suffer with us, to be close to our sufferings and make them His own. Jesus had great compassion for this widow who had now lost her son. Jesus knew what it meant to be a widow at that time, and noted that the Lord has a special love for widows, He cares for them. The widow is, an icon of the Church, because the Church is in a sense widow.

The Bridegroom is gone and she walks in history, hoping to find him, to meet with Him and she will be His true bride. In the meantime she the Church is alone! The Lord is nowhere to be seen. She has a certain dimension of widowhood ... and that makes me think of the widowhood of the Church. This courageous Church which defends her children is like the widow who went to the corrupt judge to press for her rights and eventually won it. Our Mother Church is courageous! She has the courage of a woman who knows that her children are her own, and must defend them and bring them to the meeting with her Spouse.”

The Pope reflected on some figures of widows in the Bible, in particular the courageous Maccabean widow with seven sons who are martyred for not renouncing God. The Bible, says this woman who spoke to her sons in the local dialect, in their first language, and our Mother Church speaks to us in dialect, in that language of true orthodoxy, which we all understand, the language of catechism, that gives us the strength to go forward in the fight against evil.



This dimension of widowhood of the Church, who is journeying



through history, hoping to meet, to find her Husband... Our Mother the Church is thus! She is a Church that, when she is faithful, knows how to cry. When the Church does not cry, something is not right. She weeps for her children, and prays! A Church that goes forward and does rear her children, gives them strength and accompanies them until the final farewell in order to leave them in the hands of her Spouse, who at the end will come to encounter her. This is our Mother Church! I see her in this weeping widow. And what does the Lord say to the Church? “Do not cry. I am with you, I’ll take you, I’ll wait for you there, in the

wedding, the last nuptials, those of the Lamb. Stop [your tears]: this son of yours was dead, now he lives.”

And this, is the dialogue of the Lord with the Church. She defends the children, but when she sees that the children are dead, she cries, and the Lord says to her, “I am with you and your son is with me.” As he told the boy at Naim to get up from his deathbed, many times Jesus also tells us to get



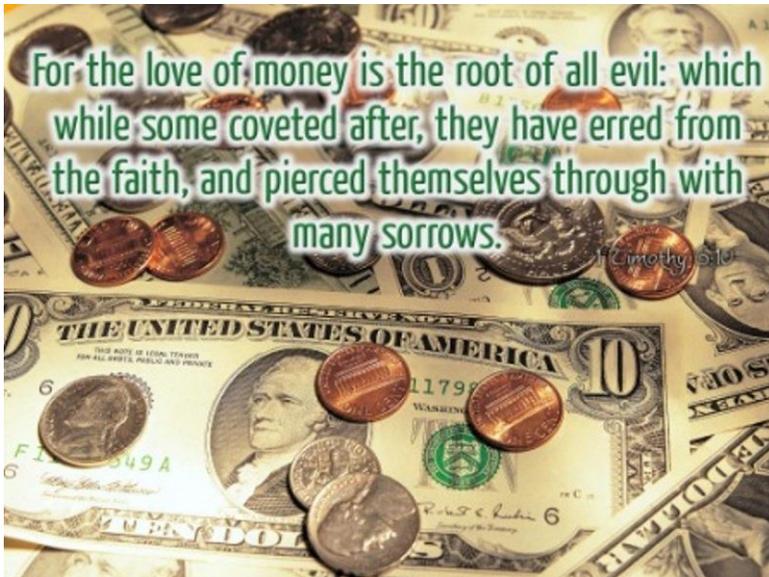
up, when we are dead because of sin and we are going to ask for forgiveness. And then what does Jesus do when He forgives us, when He gives us back our life?" He Returns us to our mother.

Our reconciliation with the Lord ends in the dialogue 'You, me and the priest who gives me pardon'; it ends when He restores us to our mother. There ends reconciliation, because there is no path of life, there is no forgiveness, there is no reconciliation outside of Mother Church. So, seeing this poor widow, all these

things come to me somewhat randomly - But I see in this widow the icon of the widowhood of the Church who is on a journey to find her Bridegroom. I get the urge to ask the Lord for the grace to be always confident of this "mommy" who defends us, teaches us, helps us grow and [teaches] us to speak the dialect. [\(VIDEO\)](#)

## Love of money is root of all evil

The love of money is the root of all evil: that stark warning contained in St Paul's first letter to Timothy was at the heart of Pope Francis homily at his morning Mass on **Friday September 20**.



Reflecting on the way in which greed can corrupt our hearts and weaken our faith, the Pope stressed we can never serve God and money at the same time. Money sickens our minds, poisons our thoughts, even poisons our faith, leading us down the path of jealousy, quarrels, suspicion and conflict. While money begins by offering a sense of wellbeing, if we are not careful wealth can quickly lead to vanity, self-importance and the sin of pride.

Many people may object that the Ten Commandments say nothing about the evils of money. Yet when we worship money, he said, we are sinning against the first Commandment and making money our idol in place of God. The early Fathers of the Church put it in a very blunt way, calling money the dung of the devil which corrupts and leads us away from our faith.

Instead of focusing on money, we should strive for justice, piety, faith and charity, as well as the gifts of patience and meekness which are the ways of the Lord. I wish that God will help each one of us to avoid falling into the trap of making money our idol. [\(VIDEO\)](#)

## The merciful gaze of Jesus

Allowing ourselves to be looked upon by Jesus, whose gaze changes our lives: this was the focus of Pope Francis' remarks after the readings at Mass on **Saturday September 21**, the **Feast of St Matthew**, Apostle and Evangelist, whose conversion story is told in the Gospel passage of the day.



Jesus looks Matthew, a tax collector, a public sinner whose whole life was money, which he idolized, right in the eye. Then, Matthew feels in his heart the gaze of the Lord who looked upon him.

That gaze overtook him completely, it changed his life. We say he was converted. He changed his life. **As soon as he felt that gaze in his heart, he got up and followed him. This is true: Jesus' gaze always lifts us up.** It is a look that always lifts us up, and never leaves you in your place, never lets us down, never humiliates. It invites you to get up - a look that brings you to grow, to move forward, that encourages you,

because the One who looks upon you loves you. The gaze makes you feel that He loves you. This gives the courage to follow Him: 'And he got up and followed him.'

The gaze of Jesus, is not something magical: Jesus was not a specialist in hypnosis. Jesus looked on everyone, and everyone felt His gaze upon him, as if Jesus had called each person by name ... and this look would change the lives of everyone. So did Peter change, who, after denying his Lord then met His gaze and wept bitterly. Then there is the final gaze, from the Cross. He looked on His mother, looked at the beloved disciple and said, with that look, he told us that His mother was our mother and that the Church is mother - with a look. Then he looked at the Good Thief, and once again to Peter, who was afraid, after the Resurrection, with those three questions: 'Do you love me?' - a look that shamed him. **It will do us well to think and pray about this gaze of Jesus, and to let ourselves be looked on by Him.** Jesus goes to the house of Matthew as he was sitting at the table many sinners arrive. Word had spread, and all of society - but not the respectable folks - felt invited to lunch, as it happened in the parable of the king who ordered the servants to go to the main crossroads to invite to his son's wedding as many people as they met, both good and bad.

And sinners, tax collectors and sinners, they felt that Jesus had looked on them and that **gaze of Jesus upon them - I believe - was like a breath on embers**, and they felt that there was fire in the belly, again, and that Jesus made lifted them up, gave them back their dignity. The gaze of Jesus always makes us worthy, gives us dignity. It is a generous look. But behold, what a teacher: dining with the dregs of the city! But beneath that dirt there were the embers of desire for God, the embers of God's image that wanted someone who could help them be kindled anew. This is what the gaze of Jesus does.

All of us, in our lives, have felt this gaze, and not once only: many times! Perhaps the person of a priest, who taught us doctrine or forgave our sins, perhaps in the help of friends... But all of us find ourselves before that gaze, that marvellous gaze, and we go forward in life, in the certainty that He looks upon us. He too, however, awaits us, in order to look on us definitively - and that final gaze of Jesus upon our lives will be forever, it will be eternal. I ask all the saints upon whom Jesus has looked, to prepare us to let ourselves be looked upon in life, and that they prepare us also for that final - and first! - gaze of Jesus! **[\(VIDEO\)](#)**