News

Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis elevates the Eucharist as he celebrates Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican May 11, 2020. The pope prayed for the unemployed as countries continue to reel from the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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As countries continue to reel from the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis offered prayers for the men and women who have been unable to work.

"In these days, many people have lost their jobs, were not rehired or work off the books. Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours who are suffering from this lack of work," the pope said May 11 at the start of his Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The pope's prayer came at a time when jobless rates have skyrocketed as businesses were forced to close their doors due to lockdown measures. According to a Washington Post report May 11, White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said the U.S. unemployment rate "is likely to rise to 20 percent" in June.

In his homily at the Mass, the pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St. John, in which Jesus promises his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit who will "teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

Referring to Christ's use of the Greek word "Paraclete," which means "advocate," the pope said the Holy Spirit is the one "who supports us, who accompanies us so we won't fall, who holds you firmly."

The Holy Spirit's two main tasks, he explained, are to "teach" and "remind" Christians about faith.

The Holy Spirit "teaches us. He teaches us the mystery of faith, he teaches us to enter into the mystery, to understand the mystery a bit better," the pope said. "And the Spirit teaches us to grow in the understanding of faith, to understand it more, to understand what faith tells us."

Faith, he added, isn't something that remains static but, like a tree, continues to grow and gives fruit.

"The Holy Spirit prevents doctrine from being mistaken, it prevents it from standing still without growing in us," he said. "He will teach us the things that Jesus taught us, he will develop in us an understanding of what Jesus taught us and will make the Lord's doctrine grow within us until it is mature."

The Spirit's second task, he continued, is to remind us of Jesus' teachings and "is like a memory, it awakens us."

"He keeps us awake, he awakens us to the things of the Lord, he helps us remember our own lives," including the times when one has chosen to follow or leave the Lord, the pope said.

Francis encouraged Christians to trust in the Holy Spirit who guides all people to discern what is right and wrong and is "God's gift" to all.

"The Spirit is the gift," he said. God "will not leave you alone, he will send you the Paraclete who will sustain you and help you to go forward, to remember, to discern and to grow. God's gift is the Holy Spirit."

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