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Pope Francis speaks to visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before praying the Angelus July 2. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Christians are called to be modern-day prophets who guide others to see the Holy Spirit at work in everyday life and not to be superstitious people who try to predict or control the future, Pope Francis said.

"A Christian does not believe in superstitions like magic, cards, horoscopes or similar things," he told some 15,000 visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square July 2 to pray the Angelus. He admonished those who do so, saying, "Many Christians go to have their hands read."

Prophets are not limited to the biblical figures who anticipated Jesus' coming, since "Jesus himself talks about the need to welcome prophets," the pope said, reflecting on the day's Gospel reading from St. Matthew in which Jesus says, "Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."

"A prophet, brothers and sisters, is each one of us," Francis said. "A prophet is he who, by virtue of baptism, helps others read the present under the action of the Holy Spirit," which helps people "understand God's plans and align yourselves" with them.

The pope said a prophet is someone who "shows Jesus to others, who witnesses him, who helps live today and build tomorrow according to his design."

Francis encouraged Christians to reflect how they live out their baptismal calling to be prophets in their daily lives, and to ask themselves: "How is my witness going? How is my prophesy?"

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He said that the day's Gospel reading not only calls on Christians to be prophets, but to receive them as well.

"It is important to welcome each other as such, as bearers of God's message, each according to his or her status and vocation, and to do so there where we live," he said, "that is, in the family, in the parish, in religious communities, in other spheres of the church and society."

Particularly in decision-making, the pope said, it is important to recognize each person's prophetic gifts and to engage in listening and dialogue before reaching a conclusion.

"Let us think about how many conflicts could be avoided and resolved in this way, listening to others with a sincere desire to understand one another," he said. "Because each one of us has something to learn from others."

After praying the Angelus, Francis asked the crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square to "not tire of praying for peace" during the summer months, and in particular for the people of Ukraine and all of the world's forgotten conflicts.

"Let us become interested in what is happening, let us help who suffers and pray, because prayer is the meek force that protects and sustains the world," he said.