Vatican
Vatican News



Pope Francis and members of the Roman Curia attend an Advent reflection led by Capuchin Father Roberto Pasolini, the new preacher of the papal household, in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican, Dec. 6, 2024. (CNS/Vatican Media)



Justin McLellan

Vatican Correspondent

View Author Profile

jmclellan@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @m/McLellan_Js



Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — December 6, 2024

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

At 53 years old, Capuchin Fr. Roberto Pasolini, the new preacher of the papal household, was among the youngest in the Vatican audience hall when he told Pope Francis and members of the Roman Curia: Be open to change.

"We tend to imagine tomorrow always as a photocopy of today, and to repeat daily routines, gestures, sometimes without heart and without great hope," he said Dec. 6 as he offered the pope and the Curia officials an Advent reflection.

Yet, he said, it is only by opening one's heart that "we can open ourselves to the novelty of God and open the doors of hope in view of a new time, perhaps also of a new way of being a church in the world and for the world."

The reflection was the first offered by Pasolini, who was named the papal preacher in November. He succeeded Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, who, at 90, had served in the role for more than four decades.

In a reflection on the biblical prophets, Pasolini said that while people may hear the words of the prophets, they "may not receive it" because they may "harden" and "close in fear."

"Our closure, perhaps the greatest, is before the hope that the prophets seek to communicate," he said. "The temptation to believe that nothing new can happen is ingrained in our hearts."

Advent, however, challenges Christians to "realize the presence of God" and to be astonished by "what he not only can, but still wants to accomplish in our lives and in

the world."

Advertisement

Citing the examples of Zechariah and Elizabeth — who had resigned themselves to infertility due to their age before miraculously conceiving John the Baptist — he said that people often believe that "life is always marked by its initial conditions," whereas "the Gospel reminds us that between the premises and the development of existence, of any kind of life, there is also discontinuity."

"Today we need to recover this deep, evangelical view of reality," he said. "We are sometimes too focused on the present. We struggle to invest in the future. We are surrounded by many concerns, imprisoned in a very oppressive materialism, and we can no longer accept either the dream or the touch of God in reality."

Pasolini said developing an openness to that view of reality requires imitating Mary's "yes" in the Annunciation, accepting the challenges and consequences of God's will.

"Every true decision, according to the Gospel, costs us our whole life and exposes us to the risk of losing privileges and certainties," the preacher said.

"It is not enough to make us listen to the good, true and promising words that God addresses us, especially in this time of Advent," he said. "We must first dissolve the rigidity of the heart, knowing how to say no to everything that risks closing us and weighing us down: fear, resignation, cynicism."