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Jubilee Holy See

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It is a great honour for me that the late Holy Father Francis thought of my person (and through me, the Order of the Perpetual Adorers) for this great event concerning the Vatican State and the entire Roman Curia. Yet it is an even greater honour that the Lord has allowed me to speak before Your Holiness! We share the Rule of Saint Augustine, to which we were formed thanks to the Venerable Giuseppe Bartolomeo Menochio, our first Superior. We were also approved by a Pope named Leo—Pope Leo XII—who, exactly two hundred years ago, was entrusted with proclaiming and guiding the Jubilee of 1825. After You, Your Holiness, I wish to greet and express my heartfelt gratitude and esteem to all the Most Eminent Cardinals, the esteemed members of the Roman Curia, and the authorities of the Vatican State.

The Thread of Hope

Your Holiness, Excellencies present here, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I have lived for ten years in the Republic of San Marino. The value of small states, in today's globalised world, is ever more precious—a treasure not to be squandered, but to be defended with all our strength. These small states, with their unique and ancient traditions, keep hope alive in a world at risk of losing its historical roots.
They are, we might say in common language, the ones who keep the **thread of hope** unbroken. This phrase is no accident. I would like to draw your attention to the biblical word for "hope": *tikva* (תִּקְוָה), whose root is *kav*, meaning "cord" or "thread".
Kav implies the image of a taut rope stretched between two poles. In biblical Hebrew, then, the one who hopes is a person who, rooted in the past, is able to launch himself towards the future while living the present in tension.

Do Not Lose the Roots, Do Not Fear the Future

How can we today, in our Church and in this small State in which the Church plays a central role, keep alive this tension between past and future?
This balance is the foundation of true **hope**. We are at risk of living in nostalgia for a past that no longer exists, falling into a form of traditionalism detached from the present; or of running towards a future that has yet to come, slipping into a sort of illusory futurism incapable of offering real solutions to today's challenges.

The past, with its pains and glories, can in truth become a great springboard for living the present in the right tension.

I am reminded of a work by de Chirico entitled *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Giorgio de Chirico, Greek by heritage and the son of noble Italians, arrived in Italy at 18 and joined the Futurist movement, siding with the interventionists of the First World War.
But in 1917, after being hospitalised in Ferrara, he came to understand that no war can truly offer a future or hope.
In 1922, he painted himself as the Prodigal Son—a self-made man, a mannequin-like figure with broad shoulders, well-formed quadriceps, and narrow ankles, turning his back on the Mediterranean landscape and, with it, the Christian culture of Greco-Latin roots, and walking toward red Ferrara—red in both monuments and avant-garde.
Yet, as in the Gospel parable, the unexpected happens: the mannequin-son experiences the disorientation of a father, depicted as a Greek statue, who steps down from his pedestal to come and meet him. (cf. *Statues, Meubles et Généraux – Le mécanisme de la pensée*, pp. 277–278).
Yes, the past comes to meet us with its questions—not to overwhelm us, but to launch us anew into the present, as we look to the future with hope.

To Hope Is to Live for Eternity

Like de Chirico, yet more so, we live in a world on the run—where progress may be a great resource but also a great danger.
A world where the possibilities offered by social media are shaping new socio-cultural models. But beware: these tools are precisely that—tools—and require that we, the users, do not abandon our roots, nor launch ourselves into a headlong race toward we-know-not-what.
We must be able to orient ourselves wisely, for, as the great bishop of Hippo wrote: **"One does not run properly unless one knows where one is running."** (cf. ST AUGUSTINE, *On the Perfection of Human Righteousness*, 8.19)

We, dear brothers and sisters, do know where we are running: the race of John and Peter to Christ's empty tomb (cf. Jn 20:4) is the only race the Church and the world can undertake without fear. It is the race of those who know that **hope lies in true life—eternal life**.
Eternity lies before us—before believers and non-believers alike, before all humanity.
If we work for short-term or mediocre horizons, our labour is in vain.
We must work for the great horizon of the life that never ends—living each moment asking whether what we are doing connects us to that truth which is charity and eternity (cf. ST AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, Book 7,10.16).
This is hope.
Hope is the affirmation of truth that respects life from conception to its natural end; that respects the dignity of every human being, regardless of gender, creed, or nationality; that honours the particular customs and cultures of every people, recognising them as part of a rich and universal heritage.

What, after all, is the deeper meaning of the Jubilee if not to help us reflect on the final things? Each of us has been touched by the brevity of life, and each of us has a duty to question the meaning of our existence. These questions can stir anxiety in the soul—feelings of inadequacy or failure—but it is precisely in such moments that hope reveals herself, as Charles Péguy described her: **that small,**

seemingly insignificant child (cf. Charles PÉGUY, *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*). Yes, faith and charity are essential to our relationships with God and others, but hope is essential for understanding the journey of history.
Péguy's greatness lies in having brought us back to the deep link between hope and humility. The humble are the truly strong, able to look upon life—not with a tired or jaded gaze, but with the eyes of wonder (cf. Charles PÉGUY, *Véronique. Dialogue between History and the Carnal Soul*). Humility also triumphs over the power of the enemy of mankind—the Evil One—who attacks precisely those places where holiness is greatest and where (as in the Vatican State) the power of Christ has been made most manifest in those who entrust themselves to Him.

We must, therefore, arm ourselves with humility to perceive, through eyes of wonder, the small but sure steps of hope.

The Eucharist: Sacrament of Our Hope

Our foundress, Blessed Maria Maddalena of the Incarnation, wrote that the last words of a holy man are the most important to remember—they are the words that ground the hope of those who remain. The last words of Christ were those of the Last Supper. He linked faith in the Father and the hope of eternal life with fraternal charity.
Thus, **hope is deeply connected to Christ's great longing: that all may be one**. The Eucharist is the **viaticum of hope** for eternal life. It beautifully ties together past, present, and future.
We also know that the Eucharist signifies and produces the unity of all humanity. But knowing this is not enough; we must believe it and proclaim it through lives of peace and unity. This is not always easy. Beyond conflicts arising from our differences, we often face personal and inner struggles.

So how can we overcome our tired, habitual gaze and develop that humble gaze of wonder?

In a time of great tribulation—the Napoleonic era, with the abduction of Pius VII and the devastation of the Roman Curia—Jesus pointed our Foundress to the city of Rome as the place to begin her work. The Pope, then residing at the Quirinal Palace, understood the importance of this foundation and desired our first monastery to be established right beside him.
And though Mother Maria Maddalena, exiled in Florence, might have begun her work there, Jesus willed that it be from Rome, the heart of Christendom, that the great call would arise to lift our **adoring gaze toward the Eucharist**—to draw strength, prayer, and light for guiding both the Church and humanity.
As Saint Augustine would say: "Amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God" (ST AUGUSTINE, *City of God*, XVIII, 51, 2: PL 41, 614).

The gaze fixed upon the Blessed Sacrament, like that directed toward the bronze serpent, can heal us, purify our vision, and open us to prophecy.
We must not fear. We have in God a mighty ally. He loves us with everlasting love and will always have mercy on us (cf. Jer 31:3).
What we must do is allow ourselves to be shaped by Him, putting into practice the insights the Holy Spirit gives us—especially through the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary, **sign of certain hope**.

The Sign of Certain Hope

A frequently misused quote is that of Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Beauty will save the world*.
This is, in truth, an incorrect citation.
In the famous Russian novel *The Idiot*, Prince Myshkin does not make a statement—he poses a question: **"Which beauty will save the world?"**
The Prince is confronted with Holbein's painting *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb*—a stark image, where Christ is depicted life-size, with sunken eyes and limbs already marked by decay.
It is a serious question indeed: what beauty will save us?
The beauty of the Cross? The beauty of defeat?

Yes, the Cross can still save us—a Cross that is **embraced and offered**.
We have lived through difficult years, marked by scandals and controversy.
Yet in this great sign, we may still triumph. This **defeated beauty** will save us.
Hope arises where the tears of sorrow and repentance fertilise the soul with humility and a newness of life.

We have another great ally: the **Queen of Beauty**, the Virgin Mary.
I leave you, then, with a final image: *The Madonna of Port Lligat*, painted by Salvador Dalí after the detonation of the atomic bomb.
A symbol of the tragedy that science and technology—when detached from ethics—can inflict upon us.

The Madonna bears the face of his wife Gala, a source of great consolation for the artist.
In the painting, signs of ruin are everywhere: the arch sheltering Mary is ancient, yet shattered—much like our institutions, aged but often marked by decay.
A fish, symbol of Christ, lies lifeless on the predella; the mountains float above the waters.
Yet the artist also scatters the canvas with **signs of rebirth**: an egg in the centre of the arch, angels with outstretched hands, and pregnant women reminiscent of the Virgin Mary.
In that brief period of religious awakening, Dalí wished to show that **Mary protects us**—in both our failures and our potential—just as she holds the Child upon her lap.
The merciful womb of Mary and the Divine Infant are depicted as open frames—**jubilee doors of hope**.
At the centre of Mary's womb is Jesus; and at the centre of the Divine Infant's womb is the Eucharistic Bread.

Gazing upon this bread, Christ holds suspended between his hands two things: the **universe and the word**—human wisdom and divine wisdom.
Thus, Jesus teaches us to rediscover the **paths of hope** by fixing our gaze on the Eucharistic Bread, drawing strength from the past to interpret the present in new ways, and daring to hope for the future.
And finally, to trust in the prompt aid of Mary: **Salus Populi Romani**, **Ianua Coeli**, **Gate of hope and consolation**.
Yes, Mary, Mother of Consolation and of Hope, **pray for us**.