

# *Pope Calls Secular Franciscans to Closeness, Compassion, Tenderness!*



## **POPE**

Pope calls Secular Franciscans to closeness, compassion, tenderness...

Pope Francis addresses the Secular Franciscan Order in Rome for their General Chapter, expressing his hope that they might fight for justice, work for an integral ecology, collaborate in missionary projects, and become artisans of peace and witnesses of the Beatitudes.

### **By Vatican News staff writer**

Addressing the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order in Rome, Pope Francis chose to "recall some elements proper to your vocation and mission".

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## **Call to holiness**

He began by noting that "your vocation stems from the universal call to holiness". This holiness, he continued, "involves the conversion of the heart, attracted, conquered, and transformed by the One who is the only Holy One". He explained that it is this that makes the Franciscans "true 'penitents'". St Francis, in his Letter to all the faithful, presents "doing penance" as a path of conversion, a path of Christian life, a commitment to do the will and works of the heavenly Father.

This is what Pope Francis urged those present to "achieve throughout their mission". The Pope said they must not confuse "doing penance" with "works of penance". "These - fasting, almsgiving, mortification - are consequences of the decision to open one's heart to God", explained the Pope.

## **The Franciscan charm**

Pope Francis went on to note that secular Franciscans are "men and women committed to living in the world according to the Franciscan charism". He urged them "to embrace the Gospel as you embrace Jesus. Let the Gospel, that is, Jesus Himself, shape your life. In this way, you will take on poverty, littleness [It: "minorità"], and simplicity as your distinguishing marks before all".

"You are part of the outgoing Church", the Pope said, adding that "with this Franciscan and secular identity of yours, your favourite place is to be in the midst of the people, and there, as laypeople - celibate or married -, priests and bishops, each according to his specific vocation, to give witness to Jesus with a simple life, without pretension, always content to follow the poor and crucified Christ, as did St Francis and so many men and women of your Order". The Pope then encouraged them to go out into

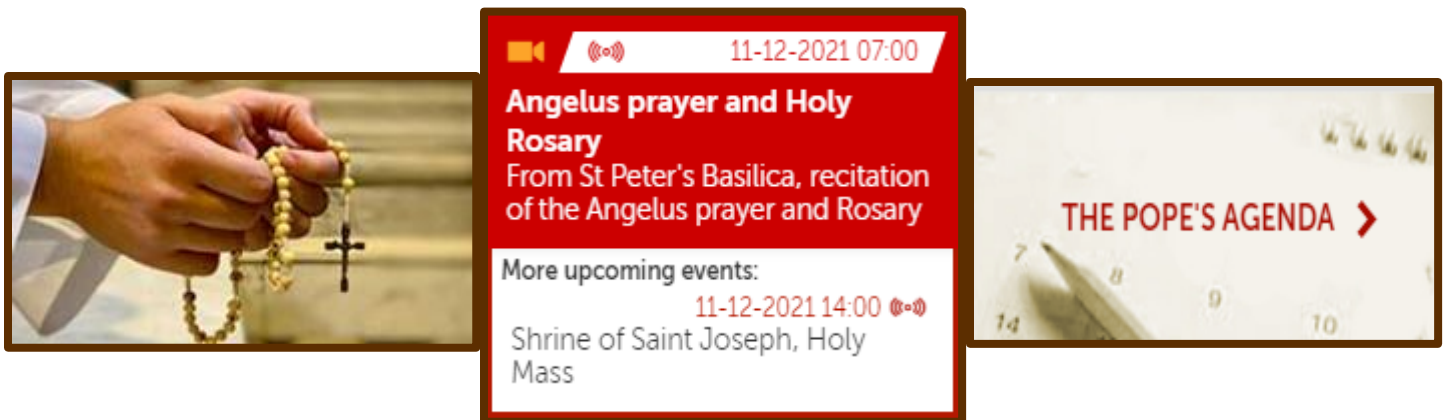
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the "existential peripheries of today, and there, to make the word of the Gospel resound".

## **Men and women of hope**

Pope Francis then went on to express his hope that "your secularity be full of closeness, compassion, and tenderness", and they might be "men and women of hope", committed to "living" their secularity, but also "'organising' it, translating it into the concrete situations of every day, into human relationships, into social and political commitment; nourishing hope in tomorrow by alleviating the pain of today".

Bringing his discourse to a close, Pope Francis reminded those present of St Francis' desire that the whole family remain united, certainly respecting the diversity and autonomy both of its various components and also of each member. This, however, he added, must always be done "in a vital mutual communion, dreaming together of a world in which all are and feel themselves [to be] brothers, and working together to build it: fighting for justice, working for an integral ecology, collaborating in missionary projects, and becoming artisans of peace and witnesses of the Beatitudes".



The image is a composite of three elements. On the left is a photograph of a hand in a white clerical sleeve holding a string of yellow rosary beads. In the center is a red notification box with white text. On the right is a portion of a calendar page with the text 'THE POPE'S AGENDA' and a right-pointing arrow.

11-12-2021 07:00

**Angelus prayer and Holy Rosary**  
From St Peter's Basilica, recitation of the Angelus prayer and Rosary

More upcoming events:  
11-12-2021 14:00  
Shrine of Saint Joseph, Holy Mass

THE POPE'S AGENDA >

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SAINT OF THE DAY