



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE Wednesday, 20 September 2017 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!*

The theme of today's catechesis is "*teaching hope*". This is why I will address it directly, with "you", imagining that I am speaking as an educator, as a father to a young person or to any other person who is open to learning.

Think; there, where God has planted you, hope! Always hope.

Do not surrender to the night; remember that the first enemy to conquer is not outside: it is within you. Therefore, do not give space to bitter, obscure thoughts. This world is the first miracle God made. God has placed the grace of new wonders in our hands. Faith and hope go forward together. Believe in the existence of the loftiest and most beautiful truths. Trust in God the Creator, in the Holy Spirit who moves everything towards the good, in the embrace of Christ who awaits every man and woman at the end of their life. Believe, he awaits you. The world walks thanks to the gaze of many men and women who have opened up breaches, who have built bridges, who have dreamed and believed, even when they heard derisive words around them.

Never think that the struggle you engage in here on earth is completely useless. Ruin does not await us at the end of life. A seed of the absolute is beating within us. God does not disappoint: if he has placed hope in our hearts, he does not want to crush it with continuous frustrations. Everything is born to flourish in an eternal Spring. God also created us to flourish. I remember that dialogue, when the oak tree asks the almond tree: 'Speak to me about God'. And the almond tree blossomed.

Wherever you may be, build! If you are down, stand up! Never stay down; stand up, allow yourself to be helped to stand up. If you are seated, set out on a journey! If boredom paralyzes you, banish

it with good works! If you feel empty or demoralized, ask that the Holy Spirit may fill your emptiness anew.

Work for peace among people, and do not listen to the voice of those who spread hate and discord. Do not listen to these voices. As different as they are from each other, human beings were created to live together. In conflicts, be patient: one day you will discover that each person is the custodian of a fragment of truth.

Love people. Love them one by one. Respect everyone's journey, be it linear or troubled, because everyone has their story to tell. Each of us too has our own story to tell. Every child born is the promise of a life which once again reveals itself to be stronger than death. Every love which springs up is a power for transformation which yearns for happiness.

Jesus has given us a light which shines in the darkness: defend it; protect it. That single light is the greatest treasure entrusted to your life.

And above all, dream! Do not be afraid to dream. Dream! Dream of a world which cannot yet be seen, but which will surely arrive. Hope leads us to believe in the existence of a creation which expands until the definitive fulfillment, when God will be everything in everyone. Men and women capable of imagination have given mankind the gifts of scientific and technological discoveries. They have sailed the oceans; they have tread on lands on which no one has ever set foot before. The men and women who have sown hope are also those who have conquered slavery, and brought about better living conditions on this earth. Think about these men and women.

Be responsible for this world and for the life of each person. Consider that every injustice against a poor person is an open wound and belittles your very dignity. Life does not stop at your existence, and other generations will come into this world, to follow ours, and still many others. Each day, ask God for the gift of courage. Remember that Jesus conquered fear for us. He conquered fear! Our most treacherous enemy can do nothing against faith. And when you feel afraid in the face of one of life's difficulties, remember that you do not live for yourself alone. In Baptism, your life was already immersed in the mystery of the Trinity and you belong to Jesus. And if one day you should be taken by fear, or you think that evil is too great to be challenged, simply consider that Jesus lives within you. It is he who, through you, with his meekness, wishes to conquer all of mankind's enemies: sin, hatred, crime, violence; all of our enemies.

Always have the courage of truth, but remember: you are not superior to anyone. Always remember this: you are superior to no one. Even should you be the last one who believes in the truth, do not for this reason spurn the company of men. Even should you live in the silence of a hermitage, bear in your heart the suffering of every creature. You are Christian; and in prayer you offer everything to God.

And cultivate ideals. Live for something that transcends mankind, and if these ideals should one day present you with a hefty bill to pay, do not stop bearing them in your heart. Faithfulness obtains all.

If you make a mistake, stand up again. There is nothing more human than making mistakes. And these same mistakes must not become a prison for you. Do not be trapped in your errors. The Son of God has come not for the healthy but for the sick; thus, he also came for you. And if you should err again in the future, do not be afraid; stand up again! Do you know why? Because God is your friend.

If bitterness strikes you, believe firmly in all the people who still work for the good: in their humility there is the seed of a new world. Associate with people who have safeguarded their heart like that of a child. Learn from wonder; nurture astonishment.

Live, love, dream, believe. And, with the grace of God, never despair.

Special greetings:

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Australia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and the United States of America. I offer a particular greeting to the new students of the Venerable English College in Rome, and assure them of my prayers as they begin their studies for the priesthood. I also welcome the physicians and medical professionals meeting in Rome, with prayerful encouragement for their efforts to cherish and defend God's gift of life in the face of today's pressing ethical challenges. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I offer a special greeting to *young people*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*. Tomorrow is the Feast of Saint Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist. Dear *young people*, may his conversion be an example for you, to live life with the criteria of faith; may his meekness sustain you, dear *sick people*, when suffering seems unbearable; and dear *newlyweds*, may his abandonment of the calculations of this world remind you of the importance of the logic of love in the matrimonial life which you have undertaken.