

*From Pontiff to Pew (continued):*

Christ, we remain in sin, and not only do we die, but we bring about the death of our neighbor. Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot believe in Jesus and promote war. We cannot believe in Jesus and kill the innocent. We cannot believe in Jesus and abandon those who suffer, those who weep, those who flee from misery.

Tonight, then, let us remember that *la Creu de Crist*, which crowns this Basilica, *és la Creu dels últims* who become the first, of sinners who become saints, of the dead who will rise again. The three facades of the Sagrada Família bear witness to this: the First becomes the last for us at the Nativity; through his sacrifice, he redeems us through his Passion; his death gives us eternal life, making us sharers in divine glory. As we admire the tower of Jesus Christ, we lift our gaze toward him, toward the One who alone reveals to us the truth about God and the truth about ourselves. By looking at Christ, we can see the world with renewed eyes: the tower of the cross then becomes a banner of charity, for God loves us in this way, transforming an instrument of death into a sign of hope. In Jesus' cross, our faith reaches its summit, as professed by the inscription found at the base of the spire: "*Tu solus Sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus.*" This cross shines by day, reflecting the sunlight, and shines by night, illuminating the city like a lighthouse overlooking the Mediterranean.

Yes, the light of Christ shines in the darkness, even though the darkness has not received it (cf. *Jn* 1:5, 11). Yet this rejection does not mean that God's love is lacking: "When you have lifted up the Son of Man," says the Lord, "then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me" (*Jn* 8:28). It is necessary to pass through the passion of the crucified One to be enlightened by the glory of the risen One, for from the beginning, the Father teaches us to give our lives, and the Son, who receives life from him, gives it to all through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is precisely why the cross is the radiant sign of his love.

It is faith that shapes the stones and gives meaning to the edifice we inhabit together. In our prayer, therefore, we discover the original bond between all things and God, the Creator of heaven and earth. He is the Artist who has imprinted his splendor upon the cosmos. Created in his image, humanity responds to God's work with its own ingenuity: this is how the artist transforms talent into praise and creativity into a testimony to the Creator himself. As an architect inspired by faith, the venerable Antoni Gaudí designed this place with the desire to narrate the mysteries of the Lord's life. In this way, he has proposed to us a spiritual pilgrimage, leading to an encounter with Christ who for our sake was born, died and rose again. Together with Gaudí, as we commemorate the centenary of his death, we remember and give thanks this evening to all the supporters and benefactors, the artists and the workers who cooperated in the construction of an architectural masterpiece, which is also an eloquent catechesis made of stones, colors and light. In her wisdom, the Church thus renews the *Biblia pauperum* of the ancient cathedrals, which are in themselves rich messages of evangelization. In this age in which image is so prevalent, it becomes even more evident how art and beauty are privileged channels of evangelization.

Dear brothers and sisters, the beauty of this church inspires us to learn ever more from our Master and Lord the art of living according to his Gospel. As we lift our gaze toward him, the crucified and risen One, let us commit ourselves to lifting up those who lie in the dust (cf. *1 Sam* 2:8). And let us show in this way that the Sagrada Família is the tallest church in the world, not so as to stand out in worldly rankings, but rather to guide the steps of the People of God who make their pilgrimage in this land of Catalonia, with the Cross illuminating their path, like a lamp burning brightly as we await the return of the Bridegroom.