DICASTERIUM
PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA

SHALOM CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TO MARK THE 45th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMUNITY'S FOUNDING

OPENING HOLY MASS

(Basilica of St. John Lateran – November 16, 2026)

HOMILY BY CARDINAL KEVIN FARRELL

(Monday of the 33rd Week in Ordinary Time: Rev 1:1-5a; 2:1-5a; Ps 1; Lk 18:35-43)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate the Eucharist at the beginning of your pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. The Shalom Community was born from the encounter between a Pope, Saint John Paul II, and a charism that was just emerging. That is why it is wonderful to be here. Saint John Lateran has been the Pope's home for centuries, and it was right here that Pope Innocent III first encountered the charism of Saint Francis and approved his Rule of Life.

In these final weeks of the year, the liturgy invites us to listen to the Book of Revelation. Today we heard its opening and the letter to the Church in Ephesus. It begins by describing how the plan of salvation reaches us: God the Father reveals it to his Son Jesus; Jesus makes it known to John through an angel; and John passes it on to the believers.

It has been the same for you as well. The Word that changed your lives came to you through a long chain of witnesses: the missionaries who brought the Gospel to Brazil, where your community was born; then the bishops, the priests, and the young lay missionaries who embraced the Gospel and

showed its beauty to other young people. Now it is your turn! You, too, are a link in this chain! Through you, many people —especially young people—must discover the plan of love and happiness that God has designed for everyone. Be grateful and thankful for this calling!

In his greeting, John wishes "grace and peace" from Christ, "the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of all the kings of the earth." This peace is not merely human: it springs from Christ's victory over death. It is the theme of the first day of your pilgrimage: "Christ Our Peace: the Risen One who passed through the Cross." Christ reigns because he first humbled himself on the cross. And he gives us peace because he took upon himself the sin of all of us and conquered it with his love, thus reconciling humanity with God.

Dear friends, what we contemplate in Christ, we too are called to live out. Peace of heart does not come from material comfort, fleeting emotions, or favorable circumstances. It is not limited to health, possessions, or success. The peace that the heart desires is the fruit of a victory, a struggle, and a death: the victory over the evil within us, the struggle against sin, and the death of our selfishness and our disordered passions. St. Francis, in his account of "perfect joy," said that conquering oneself for the love of Christ is the greatest achievement and the greatest of gifts (cf. FF 1836).

Many of you may recall a time when you were far from God, when you sought only the pleasures of the world and followed every impulse. I am certain that you do not remember those moments as times of peace, but rather as times of restlessness, emptiness, and bitterness. Peace was born within you when you passed through the cross: the suffering that turns us away from sin, the death of that part of us that is enslaved to evil. It is the path of Easter, which we are all called to walk. Just as Christ passed through death to give us peace, so too must we die to our self, to rise with him to new life.

In the Gospel, Jesus restores sight to a blind man. The blind man of Jericho calls him "Son of David"—that is, the Messiah—and recognizes in him the presence of God. It is this faith that saves him. Once healed, he follows Jesus and sings the glory of God. Perhaps the same has happened to you as well: your encounter with Christ has healed you of the blindness of the heart, made you his disciples, and set you on the path to follow him. This was the case for Saint Paul, who passed from darkness into light and devoted his life to proclaiming the Gospel. Jesus told him that he would send him to the nations "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18).

You, too, having found the true light in Christ, are sent out into the whole world to open the eyes of so many people—especially young people—so that they may turn to the God of light and love, in whom alone true peace is found.

From the very beginning, you have been a community filled with missionary zeal. The letter sent to the Church in Ephesus, in the Book of Revelation, reminds us, however, of a danger: that Church was faithful and courageous in trials, but its love was no longer what it had been in the beginning. Even love can fade when habit, comfort, and conformism take hold. Let us therefore ask the Lord that we may never lose our missionary zeal, the fruit of the love that the Holy Spirit has placed in your hearts.

Dear friends, I am certain that after 45 years, the love for Christ in the Shalom Community is still as strong as it was in the early days! And it is wonderful to see that your movement is still so young. There are so many new frontiers to reach in a world that is constantly changing. Through you, so many brothers and sisters whom we encounter in our cities —lonely and discouraged, like the blind man of Jericho—will find, hope, a sense of purpose, and the vocation to which the Lord calls them.

So go forward, with courage, along the paths the Lord will show you! To the Virgin Mary, spouse of the Holy Spirit and our Mother, and to Saint Francis of Assisi, whose 800th anniversary of death we celebrate this year, we entrust the future of the Shalom Community and the spiritual journey of each one of you.

Amen.