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Homily at Mass for Jubilee for Prisoners

Pope Francis

Some 1,000 current and former prisoners from 12 countries, as well as priests, religious men and women, and laypeople who work in prison ministry, attended a Year of Mercy Mass for prisoners Nov. 6 at St. Peter's Basilica celebrated by Pope Francis. In his homily, the pope reflected on the Sunday readings, which he said acknowledged God as the source of hope. "Hope is a gift of God. We must ask for it," he told the inmates and former inmates. "It is placed deep within each human heart in order to shed light on this life, so often troubled and clouded by so many situations that bring sadness and pain." The gift of hope, he added, is especially present "whenever some-

"Hypocrisy leads us to overlook the possibility that people can change their lives; we put little trust in rehabilitation, in reinsertion into society."

one makes a mistake" but feels the awakening of repentance and forgiveness through God's mercy. The jubilee celebration is a time for prisoners and those who have served time to remember that while a price is paid for breaking the law, "hope must not falter," he said. "Paying for the wrong we have done is one thing," the pope said, "but another thing entirely is the 'breath' of hope, which cannot be stifled by anyone or anything." Those who are behind bars are not the only ones who are imprisoned, the pope warned. People can also fall into "a certain hypocrisy" that judges current and formerly incarcerated "as wrongdoers for whom prison is the sole answer," he said. Pope Francis spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his homily follows, copyright © 2016 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

the message that God's word wants to bring us today is surely that of hope, the hope that does not disappoint.

One of the seven brothers condemned to death by King Antiochus Epiphanes speaks of "the hope God gives of being raised again by him" (2 Mc 7:14). These words demonstrate the faith of those martyrs who, despite suffering and torture, were steadfast in looking to the future. Theirs was a faith that, in acknowledging God as the source of their hope, reflected the desire to attain a new life.

In the Gospel we have heard how Jesus, with a simple yet complete answer, demolishes the banal casuistry that the Sadducees had set before him. His response — "He is

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