



Pope marks World AIDS Day and asks for prayers for apostolic journey

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-12/pope-francis-appeal-audience-aids-cyprus-greece-migrants-prayers.html>

Pope Francis shines the spotlight on World AIDS Day and looks ahead to his upcoming apostolic journey to Cyprus and Greece, asking Christians to accompany him with prayers.

By Vatican News staff writer

Pope Francis highlighted World AIDS Day, marked annually on 1 December, saying that “it is an important occasion to remember the many people affected by this virus, for many of whom in some parts of the world, access to essential treatment is unavailable.”

Greeting groups of Italian pilgrims present for the weekly General Audience, he said, “I look forward to a renewed commitment of solidarity to ensure fair and effective health care.”

The Pope’s appeal reflects the 2021 theme of World AIDS Day, which is, “End inequalities. End AIDS. End Pandemics.”

UNAIDS meanwhile issued a stark warning that if leaders fail to tackle inequalities the world could face 7.7 million AIDS-related deaths over the next 10 years. In a statement, the UN agency also warned that if the transformative measures needed to end AIDS are not taken, the world will *also* stay trapped in the COVID-19 crisis *and* remain dangerously unprepared for the pandemics to come.

Apostolic visit to Cyprus and Greece

Pope Francis also reminded the faithful that he is preparing to travel tomorrow, 2 December, to Cyprus and then to Greece, “to visit the beloved peoples of those countries, rich in history, spirituality and civilization.”

He described the visit as a journey to the sources of apostolic faith and fraternity among Christians of various denominations.

And referring to the meetings he will have with refugees and migrants in both countries, and in particular to his visit to the Greek island of Lesbos where migrants and asylum seekers are held in camps as they wait for their applications for asylum to be processed, he said, “I will also have the opportunity to approach a humanity wounded in the flesh of so many migrants in search of hope.”

“I ask you, please, to accompany me with your prayers,” he said.