

Chile

Peru



Francis

POPE FRANCIS
APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO CHILE AND PERU

15-22 JANUARY 2018

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VIDEO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR HIS IMMINENT APOSTOLIC TRIP TO CHILE AND PERU

9 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Chile and Peru,

As my journey to these lands approaches, I greet you warmly. I come to you as a pilgrim of the joy of the Gospel, to share the “Lord’s peace” with everyone and to “confirm you in a single hope”. Peace and hope shared among all.

I wish to meet you, to look into your eyes, to see your faces and to be able to experience together God’s closeness, his tenderness and the mercy which embraces and comforts us.

I know the history of your countries, forged with commitment and dedication. Together with you, I wish to give thanks to God for the faith and for our love for God and our neediest brothers and sisters, especially for the love you feel for those who are rejected by society. The throwaway culture has increasingly invaded us. I wish to take part in your joys, sorrows, difficulties and hopes, and to tell you that you are not alone, that the Pope is with you, that the entire Church welcomes you, that the Church looks towards you.

I wish to experience with you the peace that comes from God, which is so necessary; he alone can give it to us. It is the gift that Christ gives to each of us, the foundation of our coexistence and of society. Peace rests on justice and allows us to find occasions for communion and harmony. We must ask this of the Lord constantly and the Lord will give it to us. It is the peace of the Risen One who brings joy and encourages us to be missionaries, rekindling the gift of faith which leads us to encounter, to the shared communion of a single celebrated and communicated faith.

This encounter with the Risen Christ confirms us in hope. We do not

want to be anchored to the things of this world. Our gaze goes far beyond; our eyes are fixed on his mercy which heals our miseries. He gives us the impetus to stand up and continue. Experiencing first hand this closeness to God makes us a lively community, capable of being moved by those who are at our side and of taking firm steps in friendship and fraternity. We are brothers and sisters who go to encounter others in order to confirm ourselves in a single faith and hope.

I entrust this Apostolic Journey, and all the intentions we nurture in our hearts, to the hands of the Virgin Mary, Mother of America, that as a good Mother she may welcome them and show us the path towards the Son.

See you very soon! And, please do not forget to pray for me. See you soon!

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MEETING WITH AUTHORITIES, THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

La Moneda Palace (Santiago)
Tuesday, 16 January 2018

Madam President, Members of the Government of the Republic and of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of Civil Society, Distinguished Authorities, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a joy for me to stand once again on Latin American soil and begin this visit to Chile, this land so close to my heart, which welcomed and schooled me in my younger years. I would like my time with you also to be a moment of gratitude for that welcome. I think of a stanza of your national anthem, which I just heard: “How pure, Chile, are your blue skies / How pure the breezes that sweep across you / And your countryside embroidered with flowers / Is the very image of Eden”. It is a true song of praise for this land, so full of promises and challenges, but especially of hope for the future. In a certain sense, this is what President Bachelet said.

Thank you, Madam President, for your words of welcome. Through you, I would like to greet and embrace all the Chilean people, from the extreme northern region of Arica and Parinacota to the southern archipelago with its “riot of peninsulas and canals”.¹ Their rich geographical diversity gives us a glimpse of the rich cultural polyphony that is also their characteristic feature.

I am grateful for the presence of the members of the Government, the Presidents of the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies and the Supreme Court, as well as the other state authorities and their officials. I greet the President-elect, Mr Sebastián Piñera Echenique, who recently received the mandate of the Chilean people to govern the country for the next four years.

Chile has distinguished itself in recent decades by the growth of a democracy that has enabled steady progress. The recent political elections were a demonstration of the solidity and civic maturity that you have achieved, which takes on particular significance in this year marking the two-hundredth anniversary of the declaration of independence. That was a particularly important moment, for it shaped your destiny as a people founded on freedom and law, one that has faced moments of turmoil, at times painful, yet succeeded in surmounting them. In this way, you have been able to consolidate and confirm the dream of your founding fathers.

In this regard, I remember the emblematic words of Cardinal Silva Henríquez's in a *Te Deum* homily: "We – all of us – are builders of the most beautiful work: our homeland. The earthly homeland that prefigures and prepares the (heavenly) homeland that has no borders. That homeland does not begin today, with us; but it cannot grow and bear fruit without us. That is why we received it with respect, with gratitude, as a task begun many years ago, as a legacy that inspires in us both pride and commitment".²

Each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its own sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day. It is not possible to settle for what was achieved in the past and complacently enjoy it, as if we could somehow ignore the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations of injustice that none of us can ignore.

Yours is a great and exciting challenge: to continue working to make this democracy, as your forebears dreamed, beyond its formal aspects, a true place of encounter for all. To make it a place where everyone, without exception, feels called to join in building a house, a family and a nation. A place, a house and a family called Chile: generous and welcoming, enamoured of her history, committed to social harmony in the present, and looking forward with hope to the future. Here we do well to recall the words of Saint Alberto Hurtado: "A nation, more than

its borders, more than its land, its mountain ranges, its seas, more than its language or its traditions, is a mission to be fulfilled”.³ It is a future. And that future depends in large part on the ability of its people and leaders to listen.

The ability to listen proves most important in this nation, whose ethnic, cultural and historical diversity must be preserved from all partisan spirit or attempts at domination, and inspire instead our innate ability to replace narrow ideologies with a healthy concern for the common good (which without being communitarian will never be a good). It is necessary to listen: to listen to the unemployed, who cannot support the present, much less the future of their families. To listen to the native peoples, often forgotten, whose rights and culture need to be protected lest that part of this nation’s identity and richness be lost. To listen to the migrants who knock on the doors of this country in search of a better life, but also with the strength and the hope of helping to build a better future for all. To listen to young people and their desire for greater opportunities, especially in education, so that they can take active part in building the Chile they dream of, while at the same time shielding them from the scourge of drugs that rob the best part of their lives. To listen to the elderly with their much-needed wisdom and their particular needs. We cannot abandon them. To listen to children who look out on the world with eyes full of amazement and innocence, and expect from us concrete answers for a dignified future. Here I feel bound to express my pain and shame, shame at the irreparable damage caused to children by some ministers of the Church. I am one with my brother bishops, for it is right to ask for forgiveness and make every effort to support the victims, even as we commit ourselves to ensuring that such things do not happen again.

With this ability to listen, we are invited – especially today – to give preferential attention to our common home. To listen to our common home: to foster a culture that can care for the earth, and thus is not content with merely responding to grave ecological and environmental problems as they arise. This calls for boldly adopting “a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate

resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm”⁴ that allows powerful economic interests to prevail over natural ecosystems and, as a result, the common good of our peoples. The wisdom of the native peoples can contribute greatly to this. From them we can learn that a people that turns its back on the land, and everything and everyone on it, will never experience real development. Chile’s possesses a deep-rooted wisdom capable of helping to transcend a merely consumerist view of life and to adopt a sage attitude to the future.

The Chilean soul – the President said that it is a little distrustful – the Chilean soul is *a vocation to being, a stubborn will to exist*.⁵ It is a vocation to which all are summoned, and from which no one should feel excluded or unneeded. A vocation that demands a radical option for life, especially in all those forms in which it is threatened.

I thank you once more for the invitation to come among you and to encounter the soul of this people. I pray that Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mother and Queen of Chile, will continue to accompany and bring to birth the dreams of this blessed nation. Thank you!

Notes

¹ GABRIELA MISTRAL, *Elogios de la tierra de Chile*.

² Cf. *Homily* at an Ecumenical *Te Deum* (4 November 1970).

³ Cf. *Te Deum* (September 1948).

⁴ Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 111.

⁵ Cf. GABRIELA MISTRAL, *Breve descripción de Chile*, *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* 14, 1934.

MASS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

O'Higgins Park (Santiago)
Tuesday, 16 January 2018

“When Jesus saw the crowds...” (*Mt 5:1*). In these first words of today’s Gospel which we have just heard, we discover how Jesus wants to encounter us, the way that God always surprises his people (cf. *Ex 3:7*). The first thing Jesus does is to look out and see the faces of his people. Those faces awaken God’s visceral love. Jesus’ heart was not moved by ideas or concepts, but by faces, persons. By life calling out for the Life that the Father wants to give us.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he saw the faces of his followers, and what is most remarkable is that they, for their part, encounter in the gaze of Jesus the echo of their longings and aspirations. This encounter gives rise to the catalogue of the Beatitudes, that horizon towards which we are called and challenged to set out. The Beatitudes are not the fruit of passivity in the face of reality, nor of a mere onlooker gathering grim statistics about current events. They are not the product of those prophets of doom who seek only to spread dismay. Nor are they born of those mirages that promise happiness with a single “click”, in the blink of an eye. Rather, the Beatitudes are born of the compassionate heart of Jesus, which encounters the hearts, compassionate and in need of compassion, of men and women seeking and yearning for a life of happiness. Men women who know what it is to suffer, who appreciate the confusion and pain of having the earth shake beneath their feet or seeing dreams washed away when the work of a lifetime comes to nought. But men and women who also know what it is to persevere and struggle to keep going, what it is to rebuild their lives and to start again.

How much the heart of the Chilean people knows about rebuilding and starting anew! How much you know about getting up again after so

many falls! That is the heart to which Jesus speaks; so that this heart may receive the Beatitudes!

The Beatitudes are not the fruit of a hypercritical attitude or the “cheap words” of those who think they know it all yet are unwilling to commit themselves to anything or anyone, and thus end up preventing any chance of generating processes of change and reconstruction in our communities and in our lives. The Beatitudes are born of a merciful heart that never loses hope. A heart that experiences hope as “a new day, a casting out of inertia, a shaking off of weariness and negativity” (Pablo Neruda, *El habitante y su esperanza*, 5).

Jesus, in proclaiming blessed the poor, the grieving, the afflicted, the patient, the merciful... comes to *cast out the inertia* which paralyzes those who no longer have faith in the transforming power of God our Father and in their brothers and sisters, especially the most vulnerable and outcast. Jesus, in proclaiming the Beatitudes, shakes us out of that *negativity*, that sense of resignation that makes us think we can have a better life if we escape from our problems, shun others, hide within our comfortable existence, dulling our senses with consumerism (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2). The sense of resignation that tends to isolate us from others, to divide and separate us, to blind us to life around us and to the suffering of others.

The Beatitudes are that *new day* for all those who look to the future, who continue to dream, who allow themselves to be touched and sent forth by the Spirit of God.

How good it is for us to think that Jesus comes from the mountain of *Cerro Renca* or *Puntilla* to say to us: blessed, blessed indeed are you, and you, and you, each one of us... Blessed are you if, moved by the Spirit of God, you struggle and work for that *new day*, that new Chile, for yours will be the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (*Mt* 5:9).

Against the resignation that like a negative undercurrent undermines our deepest relationships and divides us, Jesus tells us: Blessed are those who work for reconciliation. Blessed are those ready to dirty their

hands so that others can live in peace. Blessed are those who try not to sow division. That is how the Beatitude teaches us to be peacemakers. It asks us to try to make ever greater room for the spirit of reconciliation in our midst. Do you want to be blessed? Do you want to be happy? Blessed are those who work so that others can be happy. Do you want peace? Then work for peace.

Here I cannot fail to mention Santiago's great bishop, who in a *Te Deum* once said: «“If you want peace, work for justice”... And if someone should ask us: “What is justice?” or whether justice is only a matter of “not stealing”, we will tell them that there is another kind of justice: the justice that demands that every man and woman be treated as such» (Cardinal RAÚL SILVA HENRÍQUEZ, *Homily at the Ecumenical Te Deum*, 18 September 1977).

To sow peace by nearness, closeness! By coming out of our homes and looking at peoples' faces, by going out of our way to meet someone having a difficult time, someone who has not been treated as a person, as a worthy son or daughter of this land. This is the only way we must forge a future of peace, to weave a fabric that will not unravel. A peacemaker knows that it is often necessary to overcome great or subtle faults and ambitions born of the desire for power and to “gain a name for oneself”, the desire to be important at the cost of others. A peacemaker knows that it is not enough simply to say: “I am not hurting anybody”. As Saint Alberto Hurtado used to say: “It is very good not to do wrong, but very bad not to do good” (*Meditación radial*, April 1944).

Peacebuilding is a process that calls us together and stimulates our creativity in fostering relationships where we see our neighbour not as a stranger, unknown, but rather as a son and daughter of this land.

Let us commend ourselves to Mary Immaculate, who from *Cerro San Cristóbal* watches over and accompanies this city. May she help us to live and to desire the spirit of the Beatitudes, so that on every corner of this city we will hear, like a gentle whisper: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (*Mt 5:9*).

SHORT VISIT TO THE WOMEN'S PENITENTIARY OF SANTIAGO

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Santiago
Tuesday, 16 January 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Thank you, thank you, thank you for what you have done and thank you for giving me this opportunity to visit you. For me it is important to share this time with you and draw closer to our many brothers and sisters presently deprived of their freedom. Thank you, Sister Nelly, for your kind words and especially for *testifying that life always triumphs over death, always*. Thank you, Janeth, for coming forward and sharing your hurt with all of us, and for your courageous request for forgiveness. How much we all have to learn from your act of courage and humility! I quote your words: "We ask forgiveness from all those whom we have harmed by our misdeeds". I thank you for reminding us that without this attitude we lose our humanity, all of us need to ask forgiveness, me first of all, all of us, that is what makes us human. Without this attitude of asking forgiveness, we forget that we did wrong and that we can make mistakes and that every day is an invitation to start over, one way or another.

I also think of the words of Jesus: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone" (*Jn 8:7*). And do you know what I tend to do in my homilies when I speak about all of us having something inside either due to weakness or because we fall or because we hide it well? I tell the people: Let's see, we are all sinners, we all have sins. I don't know, is there anyone here without sin? Raise your hand. No one dares raise their hand. Jesus asks us to leave behind the simplistic way of thinking that divides reality into good and bad, and to enter into that other mindset that recognizes our weaknesses, limitations and even

sins, and thus helps us to keep moving forward.

As I came in, some mothers met me with their children. They welcomed me, and their welcome can nicely be expressed in two words: *mother* and *children*.

Mother. Many of you are mothers and you know what it means to bring a new life into the world. You were able to “take upon yourself” a new life and bring it to birth. Motherhood is not, and never will be a problem. It is a gift, and one of the most wonderful gifts you can ever have. Today you face a very real challenge: you also have to care for that life. You are asked to care for the future. To make it grow and to help it to develop. Not just for yourselves, but for your children and for society as a whole. As women, you have an incredible ability to adapt to new circumstances and move forward. Today I appeal to that ability to bring forth the future that is alive in each one of you. That ability enables you to resist everything that might rob you of your identity and end up by killing your hope. None of us are things, we are all persons and as such we have the dimension of hope. Let us not be robbed of our identity. I am not a number, I am not a prisoner with a given number, I have a name and I have the ability to bring forth hope, because I want to give birth to hope.

Janeth was right: losing our freedom does not mean *losing our dreams and hopes*. This is true, it is very painful, but this does not mean losing hope, nor losing the ability to dream. Losing our freedom is not the same thing as losing our dignity, it is not the same thing. Dignity must not be touched, it must be cared for, protected, and shown tenderness. No one must be deprived of dignity. You are deprived of freedom. That is why we need to reject all those petty clichés that tell us we can’t change, that it’s not worth trying, that nothing will make a difference. As the Argentinean tango says: “Go ahead, keep it up, we’ll all meet there in hell”. It’s not true that we cannot make a difference. No, dear sisters! Some things do make a difference! All those efforts we make to build for a better future – even if often it seems they just go down the drain – all of them will surely bear fruit and be rewarded.

The second word is *children*. Children are our strength, our future,

our incentive. They are a living reminder that life has to be lived for the future, not remain in the past. Today your freedom has been taken away, but that is not the last word. Not at all! Keep looking forward. Look ahead to the day when you will return to life in society. A prison sentence without a future is not a human sentence, it is torture. Every sentence being lived out to pay a debt to society must have a perspective, that is, it must have the horizon of reintegration and preparation for being reintegrated. This is something you must demand of society. Always have this outlook, look forwards, towards reintegration into today's society. For this reason, I applaud and encourage every effort to spread and support projects like *Espacio Mandela* and the *Fundación Mujer levántate*.

The name of that Foundation makes me think of the Gospel passage where people laughed at Jesus because he said that the daughter of the synagogue leader wasn't dead, but only asleep. They laughed at him. Jesus showed us how to meet that kind of derision: he went straight to her room, took her by the hand and said: "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" (*Mk 5:41*). For all, the girl was dead, but for Jesus, not so. Projects like those I mentioned are a living sign of this Jesus, who enters into each of our homes, pays no attention to ridicule and never gives up. He takes us by the hand and tells us to "get up". It is wonderful that so many Christians and people of good will, that there are people of different beliefs in life or who have no religion but show good will, who follow in the footsteps of Jesus and decide to come here to be a sign of that outstretched hand us that lifts us up. I ask you: "Get up". Always get up.

We all know that, sadly, a jail sentence can be thought of or reduced to the idea of a punishment, offering no opportunities for personal growth. This is what I was explaining about hope, about looking forwards, generating processes of reintegration. This must be your dream: reintegration. If the path is long, do your best to make it shorter, but always with the idea of reintegration. Society has an obligation – an *obligation* – to provide for your reintegration, for all of you. When I say this, I mean to reintegrate each of you in your own personal way. One will do it one way, another will do it in a different

way. One will take more time, another less. But it is always a person who is being reintegrated. Please have this firmly in your minds and demand it. This is what it means to generate a process. On the contrary, those initiatives that offer job training and help to rebuild relationships are signs of hope for the future. Let us help them to grow. Public order must not be reduced to stronger security measures, but should be concerned primarily with preventive measures, such as work, education, and greater community involvement.

With these thoughts I want to bless all of you and also greet the pastoral workers, volunteers and professional personnel, especially the police officers and their families. I pray for you. Your work is sensitive and complex, and so I ask you, the authorities, to try to provide the conditions needed to carry out your work with dignity. A dignity that engenders dignity. Dignity is contagious, more so than the flu. Dignity is contagious, dignity engenders dignity.

Mary is our Mother and we are her children, you are her daughters. We ask her to intercede for you, for each of your children and your dear ones. May she cover you with her mantle. And I ask you, please, pray for me because I need it. Thank you.

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MEETING WITH PRIESTS, CONSECRATED MEN AND WOMEN AND SEMINARIANS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Santiago Cathedral
Tuesday, 16 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good afternoon!

I am happy to be meeting with you. I like the way that Cardinal Ezzati presented you: *Here you are...* consecrated women, consecrated men, priests, permanent deacons and seminarians. *Here you are.* It made me think of the day of our ordination or consecration, when after being presented, each of us said: “*Here I am, Lord, to do your will*”. In this meeting, we want to tell the Lord: “*Here we are*”, and renew our “yes” to him. We want to renew together our response to the call that one day took our hearts by surprise.

I think that it can help us to start with the Gospel passage that we heard, and to share three moments experienced by Peter and the first community: Peter and the community disheartened, Peter and the community shown mercy, and Peter and the community transfigured. I play with this pairing of Peter and the community since the life of apostles always has this twofold dimension, the personal and the communitarian. They go hand-in-hand and we cannot separate them. We are called individually but always as part of a larger group. Where vocation is concerned, there is no such thing as a selfie! Vocation demands that somebody else take your picture, and that is what we are about to do! That is the fact of the matter.

1. Peter disheartened, the community disheartened

I have always liked the way the Gospels do not adorn or soften things, or paint them in nice colours. They show us life as it is and not as it should be. The Gospel is not afraid to show us the difficult, and even tense, moments experienced by the disciples.

Let us reconstruct the scene. Jesus had been killed, but some women said he was alive (*Lk 24:22-24*). Even after the disciples had seen the risen Jesus, the event was so powerful that they would need time to understand it. Luke says that “in their joy, they could not believe”. They would need time to understand what had happened. That understanding would come to them at Pentecost with the sending of the Holy Spirit. The encounter with the Risen Lord would require time to find a place in the hearts of his disciples.

The disciples go home. They go back to do what they knew how to do: to fish. Not all of them, but only some of them. Were they divided? Fragmented? We don't know. The Scriptures tell us that those who were there caught nothing. Their nets were empty.

Yet another kind of emptiness unconsciously weighed upon them: dismay and confusion at the death of their Master. He was no more; he had been crucified. But not only was he crucified, but so were they, since Jesus's death raised a whirlwind of conflicts in the hearts of his friends. Peter had denied him; Judas had betrayed him; the others had fled and hid themselves. Only a handful of women and the beloved disciple remained. The rest took off. In a matter of days, everything had fallen apart. *These are the hours of dismay and confusion in the life of the disciple.* There are times “when the tempest of persecutions, tribulations, doubts, and so forth, is raised by cultural and historical events, it is not easy to find the path to follow. Those times have their own temptations: the temptation to debate ideas, to avoid the matter at hand, to be too concerned with our enemies... And I believe that the worst temptation of all is to keep dwelling on our own discouragement”.¹ Yes, dwelling on how disheartened we are. So it was with the disciples.

As Cardinal Ezzati told us, “the priesthood and consecrated life in Chile have endured and continue to endure difficult times of significant upheavals and challenges. Side by side with the fidelity of the immense majority, there have sprung up weeds of evil and their aftermath of scandal and desertion”.

Times of upheaval. I know the pain resulting from cases of abuse of

minors and I am attentive to what you are doing to respond to this great and painful evil. Painful because of the harm and sufferings of the victims and their families, who saw the trust they had placed in the Church's ministers betrayed. Painful too for the suffering of ecclesial communities, but also painful for you, brothers and sisters, who, after working so hard, have seen the harm that has led to suspicion and questioning; in some or many of you this has been a source of doubt, fear or a lack of confidence. I know that at times you have been insulted in the metro or walking on the street, and that by going around in clerical attire in many places you pay a heavy price. For this reason, I suggest that we ask God to grant us the clear-sightedness to call reality by its name, the strength to seek forgiveness and the ability to listen to what he tells us and not dwell on our discouragement.

There is something else I would like to mention. Our societies are changing. Chile today is quite different from what I knew in my youth, when I was at school. New and different cultural expressions are being born which do not fit into our familiar patterns. We have to realize that many times we do not know how to deal with these new situations. Sometimes we dream of the "fleshpots of Egypt" and we forget that the promised land lies ahead of us, not behind us, and that the promise is not about yesterday but about tomorrow. At those times, we can yield to the temptation of becoming closed, isolating ourselves and defending our ways of seeing things, which then turn out as nothing more than fine monologues. We can be tempted to think that everything is wrong, and in place of "good news", the only thing we profess is apathy and disappointment. As a result, we shut our eyes to the pastoral challenges, thinking that the Spirit has nothing to say about them. In this way, we forget that the Gospel is a journey of conversion, not just for "others" but for ourselves as well.

Whether we like it or not, we are called to face reality as it is – our own personal reality and the reality of our communities and societies. The nets – the disciples say – are empty, and we can understand their feelings. They return home with no great tales to tell; they go back empty-handed; they return disheartened.

What became of those strong, enthusiastic and self-assured disciples who felt themselves chosen and had left everything to us follow Jesus (cf. *Mt* 1:16-20)? What became of those disciples who were so sure of themselves that they would go to prison and even give their lives for the Master (cf. *Lk* 22:33), who to defend him would have liked to send fire upon the earth (cf. *Lk* 9:54). For whom they would unsheathe their swords and fight (cf. *Lk* 22:49-51)? What became of that Peter who reproached the Master about how he should live his life and bring about our redemption? Discouragement (cf. *Mk* 8:31-33).

2. Peter shown mercy, the community shown mercy

It is the hour of truth in the life of the first community. It is time for Peter to have to confront a part of himself. The part of him that many times he didn't want to see. He experienced his limitation, his frailty and his sinfulness. Peter, the temperamental, impulsive leader and saviour, self-sufficient and over-confident in himself and in his possibilities, had to acknowledge his weakness and sin. He was a sinner like everyone else, as needy as the others, as frail as anyone else. Peter had failed the one he had promised to protect. It is a crucial moment in Peter's life.

As disciples, as Church, we can have the same experience: there are moments when we have to face not our success but our weakness. Crucial moments in the life of a disciple, but also the times when an apostle is born. Let us allow the text to guide us.

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” (*Jn* 21:15).

After they ate, Jesus takes Peter aside and his only words are a question, a question about love: Do you love me? Jesus neither reproaches nor condemns. The only thing that he wants to do is to save Peter. He wants to save him from the danger of remaining closed in on his sin, constantly dwelling with remorse on his frailty; he wants to save him from the danger of renouncing, because of that frailty, on all the goodness he had known with Jesus. Jesus wants to save him from self-centredness and isolation. He wants to save him from the destructive

attitude of becoming a victim or of thinking “what does it matter”, which waters down any commitment and ends up in the worst sort of relativism. Jesus wants to set him free from seeing his opponents as enemies and being upset by opposition and criticism. He wants to free him from being downcast and, above all, negative. By his question, Jesus asks Peter to listen to his heart and to learn how to *discern*. Since “it was not God’s way to defend the truth at the cost of charity, or charity at the cost of truth, or to smooth things away at the cost of both. Peter has to discern. Jesus wants to avoid turning Peter into someone who hurts others by telling the truth, or is kind to others by telling lies, or simply someone paralyzed by his own uncertainty”,² as can happen to us in these situations.

Jesus questioned Peter about love and kept asking until Peter could give him a *realistic response*: “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you” (*Jn 21:17*). In this way, Jesus confirms him in his mission. In this way, he now makes him definitively his apostle.

What is it that confirms Peter as an apostle? What sustains us as apostles? One thing only: that we “received mercy” (*1 Tim 1:12-16*). “For all our sins, our limitations, our failings, for all the many times we have fallen, Jesus has looked upon us and drawn near to us. He has given us his hand and shown us mercy. All of us can think back and remember the many times the Lord looked upon us, drew near and showed us mercy”.³ I ask you to keep doing this. We are not here because we are better than others; we are not superheroes who stoop down from the heights to encounter mere mortals. Rather, we are sent as men and women conscious of having been forgiven. That is the source of our joy. We are consecrated, shepherds modelled on Jesus, who suffered died and rose. A consecrated man or woman – and with the word “consecrated” I am referring to all of us here – sees his or her wounds as signs of the resurrection; who sees in the wounds of this world the power of the resurrection; who, like Jesus, does not meet his brothers and sisters with reproach and condemnation.

Jesus Christ does not appear to his disciples without his wounds; those very wounds enabled Thomas to profess his faith. We are not

asked to ignore or hide our wounds. A Church with wounds can understand the wounds of today's world and make them her own, suffering with them, accompanying them and seeking to heal them. A wounded Church does not make herself the centre of things, does not believe that she is perfect, but puts at the centre the one who can heal those wounds, whose name is Jesus Christ.

The knowledge that we are wounded sets us free. Yes, it sets us free from becoming self-referential and thinking ourselves superior. It sets us free from the promethean tendency of "those who ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style of the past".⁴

In Jesus, our wounds are risen. They inspire solidarity; they help us to tear down the walls that enclose us in elitism and they impel us to build bridges and to encounter all those yearning for that merciful love which Christ alone can give. "How often we dream up vast apostolic projects, meticulously planned, just like defeated generals! But this is to deny our history as a Church, which is glorious precisely because it is a history of sacrifice, of hopes and daily struggles, of lives spent in service and fidelity to work, tiring as it may be, for all work is 'the sweat of our brow'".⁵ I am concerned when I see communities more worried about their image, about occupying spaces, about appearances and publicity, than about going out to touch the suffering of our faithful people.

How searching and insightful were the words of warning issued by one Chilean saint: "All those methods will fail that are imposed by uniformity, that try to bring us to God by making us forget about our brothers and sisters, that make us close our eyes to the universe rather than teaching us to open them and raise all things to the Creator of all, that make us selfish and close us in on ourselves".⁶

God's people neither expect nor need us to be superheroes. They expect pastors, consecrated men and women, who know what it is to be compassionate, who can give a helping hand, who can spend time with those who have fallen and, like Jesus, help them to break out of that endless remorse that poisons the soul.

3. Peter transfigured, the community transfigured

Jesus asks Peter to discern, and events in Peter's life then begin to come together, like the prophetic gesture of the washing of feet. Peter, who resisted having his feet washed, now begins to understand that true greatness comes from being lowly and a servant.⁷

What a good teacher our Lord is! The prophetic gesture of Jesus points to the prophetic Church that, washed of her sin, is unafraid to go out to serve a wounded humanity.

Peter experienced in his flesh the wound of sin, but also of his own limitations and weaknesses. Yet he learned from Jesus that his wounds could be a path of resurrection. To know both Peter disheartened and Peter transfigured is an invitation to pass from being a Church of the unhappy and disheartened to a Church that serves all those people who are unhappy and disheartened in our midst. A Church capable of serving her Lord in those who are hungry, imprisoned, thirsting, homeless, naked and infirm... (*Mt 25:35*). A service that has nothing to do with a welfare mentality or an attitude of paternalism, but rather with the conversion of hearts. The problem is not feeding the poor, or clothing the naked or visiting the sick, but rather recognizing that the poor, the naked, the sick, prisoners and the homeless have the dignity to sit at our table, to feel "at home" among us, to feel part of a family. This is the sign that the kingdom of heaven is in our midst. This is the sign of a Church wounded by sin, shown mercy by the Lord, and made prophetic by his call.

To renew prophecy is to renew our commitment not to expect an ideal world, an ideal community, or an ideal disciple in order to be able to live and evangelize, but rather to make it possible for every disheartened person to encounter Jesus. One does not love ideal situations or ideal communities; one loves persons.

The frank, sorrowful and prayerful recognition of our limitations, far from distancing us from our Lord, enables us to return to Jesus in the knowledge that "with his newness, he is always able to renew our lives and our communities, and even if the Christian message has known

periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old... Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world".⁸ How good it is for all of us to let Jesus renew our hearts.

When this meeting began, I told you that we came to renew our "yes", with enthusiasm, with passion. We want to renew our "yes", but as a realistic "yes", sustained by the gaze of Jesus. When you return to your homes, I ask you to draw up in your hearts a sort of spiritual testament, along the lines of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez and his beautiful prayer that begins:

"The Church that I love is the holy Church of each day... Yours, mine, the holy Church of each day...

"Jesus Christ, the Gospel, the bread, the Eucharist, the humble Body of Christ of each day. With the faces of the poor, the faces of men and women who sing, who struggle, who suffer. The holy Church of each day."

I ask you: What sort of Church is it that you love? Do you love this wounded Church that encounters life in the wounds of Jesus?

Thank you for this meeting. Thank you for the chance to say "yes" once more with you. May Our Lady of Mount Carmel cover you with her mantle. And please, do not forget to pray for me.

Notes

¹ Jorge M. Bergoglio, *Las Cartas de la tribulación*, 9, ed. Diego de Torres, Buenos Aires, 1987.

² Ibid.

³ Video Message to CELAM for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy on the

American Continent, 27 August 2016.

⁴ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 94.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶ SAINT ALBERTO HURTADO, *Address to the Young People of Catholic Action*, 1943.

⁷ “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (*Mk* 9:35).

⁸ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 11.

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MEETING WITH THE BISHOPS

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER

Santiago Cathedral Sacristy
Tuesday, 16 January 2018

Dear Brothers:

I thank you for the greeting that the President of the Conference has offered to me in the name of all present.

Before all else, I would like to greet Bishop Bernardino Piñero Carvallo, who this year celebrates his sixtieth anniversary of episcopal ordination – he is the oldest bishop in the world, not only in age but also in years of episcopate – who was present for four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. A marvellous living memory.

Soon a year will have passed since your *ad limina* visit. Now it is my turn to come and visit you. I am pleased that our meeting follows that with our consecrated men and women, for one of our principal tasks is precisely *to be close* to consecrated life and to our priests. If the shepherd wanders off, the sheep too will stray and fall prey to any wolf that comes along. The fatherhood of the bishop with his priests, with his presbyterate! A fatherhood that neither paternalism nor authoritarianism, but a gift to be sought. Stay close to your priests, like Saint Joseph, with a fatherhood that helps them to grow and to develop the charisms that the Holy Spirit has wished to pour out upon your respective presbyterates.

I know that ours was meant to be a brief meeting, since we already discussed a great deal in the two extensive sessions we had during the *ad limina* visit. But I would like to reiterate some of the points I made during our meeting in Rome. I can sum them up in the following phrase: the consciousness of being a people, of being the People of God.

One of the problems facing our societies today is the sense of being

orphaned, of not belonging to anyone. This “postmodern” feeling can seep into us and into our clergy. We begin to think that we belong to no one; we forget that we are part of God’s holy and faithful people and that the Church is not, nor will it ever be, an élite of consecrated men and women, priests and bishops. Without this consciousness of being a people, we are not able to sustain our life, our vocation and our ministry. To forget this – as I said to the Commission for Latin America – “carries many risks and distortions in our own experience, as individuals and in community, of the ministry that the Church has entrusted to us”.¹ The lack of consciousness of belonging to God’s faithful people as servants, and not masters, can lead us to one of the temptations that is most damaging to the missionary outreach that we are called to promote: clericalism, which ends up as a caricature of the vocation we have received.

A failure to realize that the mission belongs to the entire Church, and not to the individual priest or bishop, limits the horizon, and even worse, stifles all the initiatives that the Spirit may be awakening in our midst. Let us be clear about this. The laypersons are not our peons, or our employees. They don’t have to parrot back whatever we say. “Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and the sacramentality of the Church belong to all the faithful people of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 9-14), not only to the few chosen and enlightened”.²

Let us be on guard, please, against this temptation, especially in seminaries and throughout the process of formation. I must confess, I am concerned about the formation of seminarians, that they be pastors at the service of the People of God; as a pastor should be, through the means of doctrine, discipline, the sacraments, by being close to the people, through works of charity, but also with the awareness that they are the People of God. Seminaries must stress that future priests be capable of serving God’s holy and faithful people, acknowledging the diversity of cultures and renouncing the temptation to any form of clericalism. The priest is a minister of Jesus Christ: Jesus is the

protagonist who makes himself present in the entire people of God. Tomorrow's priests must be trained with a view to the future, since their ministry will be carried out in a secularized world. This in turn demands that we pastors discern how best to prepare them for carrying out their mission in these concrete circumstances and not in our "ideal worlds or situations". Their mission is carried out in fraternal unity with the whole People of God. Side by side, supporting and encouraging the laity in a climate of discernment and synodality, two of the essential features of the priest of tomorrow. Let us say no to clericalism and to ideal worlds that are only part of our thinking, but touch the life of no one.

And in this regard, to implore from the Holy Spirit the gift of dreaming. Please do not stop dreaming, dreaming and working for a missionary and prophetic option capable of transforming everything, so that our customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and ecclesial structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of Chile rather than for ecclesiastical self-preservation. Let us not be afraid to strip ourselves of everything that separates us from the missionary mandate.³

Dear brothers, this is the summary I wanted to offer you from our discussions during the *ad limina* visit. Let us commend ourselves to the protection of Mary, Mother of Chile. Let us pray together for our presbyterates and for our consecrated men and women. Let us pray for God's holy and faithful people, of which we are a part. Thank you!

Notes

¹ *Letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet*, President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (21 March 2016).

² *Ibid.*

³ Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 27.

MASS FOR THE PROGRESS OF PEOPLES

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

Maquehue Airport (Temuco)
Wednesday, 17 January 2018

“Mari, Mari” [Good morning!]

“Küme tünngün ta niemün” [“Peace be with you!” (*Lk 24:36*)]

I thank God for allowing me to visit this beautiful part of our continent, the Araucanía. It is a land blessed by the Creator with immense and fertile green fields, with forests full of impressive araucarias – the fifth “praise” offered by Gabriela Mistral to this Chilean land¹ – and with its majestic snow-capped volcanoes, its lakes and rivers full of life. This landscape lifts us up to God, and it is easy to see his hand in every creature. Many generations of men and women have loved this land with fervent gratitude. Here I would like to pause and greet in a special way the members of the Mapuche people, as well as the other indigenous peoples who dwell in these southern lands: the Rapanui (from Easter Island), the Aymara, the Quechua and the Atacameños, and many others.

Seen through the eyes of tourists, this land will thrill us with its magnificent landscapes as we pass through it, but if we stop and put our ear to the ground, we will hear it sing: “Arauco has a sorrow that cannot be silenced, the injustices of centuries that everyone sees taking place”.²

In the context of thanksgiving for this land and its people, but also of sorrow and pain, we celebrate this Eucharist. We do so in this Maquehue aerodrome, which was the site of grave violations of human rights. We offer this Mass for all those who suffered and died, and for those who daily bear the burden of those many injustices. And in remembering, let us together remain a moment in silence before so many wrongs and injustices. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross bears all the sin and pain of our peoples, in order to redeem it.

In the Gospel we have just heard, Jesus prays to the Father “that they may all be one” (*Jn 17:21*). At a crucial moment in his own life, he stops to plea for unity. In his heart, he knows that one of the greatest threats for his disciples and for all mankind will be division and confrontation, the oppression of some by others. How many tears would be spilled! Today we want to cling to this prayer of Jesus, to enter with him into this garden of sorrows with those sorrows of our own, and to ask the Father, with Jesus, that we too may be one. May confrontation and division never gain the upper hand among us.

This unity implored by Jesus is a gift that must be persistently sought, for the good of our land and its children. We need to be on our watch against temptations that may arise to “poison the roots” of this gift that God wants to give us, and with which he invites us to play a genuine role in history. What are those temptations?

1. *False synonyms*

One of the main temptations we need to resist is that of confusing unity with uniformity. Jesus does not ask his Father that all may be equal, identical, for unity is not meant to neutralize or silence differences. Unity is not an idol or the result of forced integration; it is not a harmony bought at the price of leaving some people on the fringes. The richness of a land is born precisely from the desire of each of its parts to share its wisdom with others. Unity can never be a stifling uniformity imposed by the powerful, or a segregation that does not value the goodness of others. The unity sought and offered by Jesus acknowledges what each people and each culture are called to contribute to this land of blessings. Unity is a reconciled diversity, for it will not allow personal or community wrongs to be perpetrated in its name. We need the riches that each people has to offer, and we must abandon the notion that there are superior or inferior cultures. A beautiful “chamal” requires weavers who know the art of blending the different materials and colours, who spend time with each element and each stage of the work. That process can be imitated industrially, but everyone will recognize a machine-made garment. The art of unity requires true artisans who know how to harmonize differences in the

“design” of towns, roads, squares and landscapes. Unity is not “desk art”, or paperwork; it is a craft demanding attention and understanding. That is the source of its beauty, but also of its resistance to the passage of time and to whatever storms may come its way.

The unity that our people need requires that we listen to one another, but even more importantly, that we esteem one another. “This is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them”.³ This sets us on the path of solidarity as a means of weaving unity, a means of building history. The solidarity that makes us say: We need one another, *and* our differences so that this land can remain beautiful! It is the only weapon we have against the “deforestation” of hope. That is why we pray: Lord, make us artisans of unity.

Another temptation can come from considering the weapons of unity.

2. The weapons of unity.

If unity is to be built on esteem and solidarity, then we cannot accept any means of attaining it. There are two kinds of violence that, rather than encouraging the growth of unity and reconciliation, actually threaten them. First, we have to be on our guard against coming up with “elegant” agreements that will never be put into practice. Nice words, detailed plans – necessary as these are – but, when unimplemented, end up “erasing with the elbow, what was written by the hand”. This too is violence. Why? Because it frustrates hope.

In the second place, we have to insist that a culture of mutual esteem may not be based on acts of violence and destruction that end up taking human lives. You cannot assert yourself by destroying others, because this only leads to more violence and division. Violence begets violence, destruction increases fragmentation and separation. Violence eventually makes a most just cause into a lie. That is why we say “no to destructive violence” in either of its two forms.

Those two approaches are like the lava of a volcano that wipes out and burns everything in its path, leaving in its wake only barrenness and desolation. Let us seek, and never tire of seeking dialogue for the

sake of unity.⁴That is why we cry out: Lord, make us artisans of your unity.

All of us, to a certain extent, are people of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*). All of us are called to “the good life” (Küme Mongen), as the ancestral wisdom of the Mapuche people reminds us. How far we have to go, and how much we still have to learn! Küme Mongen, a deep yearning that not only rises up from our hearts, but resounds like a loud cry, like a song, in all creation. Therefore, brothers and sisters, for the children of this earth, for the children of their children, let us say with Jesus to the Father: may we too be one; Lord, make us artisans of unity.

Notes

¹ GABRIELA MISTRAL, *Elogios de la tierra de Chile*.

² VIOLETA PARRA, *Arauco tiene una pena*.

³ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 246.

⁴ *Message for the 2017 World Day of Peace*.

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MEETING WITH THE YOUTH

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

National Shrine of Maipú, Santiago
Wednesday, 17 January 2018

Ariel, I too am happy to be with you. Thank you for your words of welcome in the name of all present. I am truly grateful to share this time with you, which as I read there: “You got off the couch, and put on your shoes”. Thank you! I consider it important for me that we meet and walk with one another for a while. Let’s help each other to look ahead! And for you I think it’s important too. Thank you.

And I am happy that this meeting is taking place here in Maipú. In this land where the history of Chile began with a fraternal embrace, in this Shrine that rises at the crossroads of north and south, that joins the snow and the sea, and is a home to both heaven and earth. A home for Chile, a home for you, dear young people, where Our Lady of Carmel waits for you and welcomes you with an open heart. And just as she accompanied the birth of this nation and has accompanied so many Chileans over the span of these two hundred years, so too she wants to keep accompanying the dreams that God places in your hearts: dreams of freedom, dreams of joy, dreams of a better future: the desire, as you said, Ariel, “to be protagonists of change”. To be protagonists. Our Lady of Mount Carmel accompanies you so that you can be protagonists for the Chile of which your hearts dream. I know that the hearts of young Chileans dream, and that they dream big dreams, not only when they are a little tipsy, no, they always dream big; for these lands have given rise to experiences that spread and multiplied across the diverse countries of our continent. And who inspired those dreams? It was young people like yourselves, who were inspired to experience the adventure of faith. For faith excites in young people feelings of adventure, an adventure that beckons them to traverse unbelievable landscapes, rough and tough terrain ... but, then again, you like

adventures and challenges, except those who haven't yet gotten up off the couch: get up quickly! That's how we can keep going; you who are experts, help them put their shoes on. After all, you get bored when there are no challenges to excite you. We see this, for example, whenever there is a natural disaster. You have an amazing ability to mobilize, which is a sure sign of the generosity of your hearts. Thank you.

I wanted to begin with this reference to the motherland, for the way forward, the dreams that must be made real, with our gaze always facing the horizon, we must act with our feet on the ground of our motherland, our country. If you do not love your country, I do not believe that you will be able to love Jesus and love God. Love for one's country is love for a mother, we call her "Mother Land", because we are born here, and she teaches us, as every mother does, to walk, and she is entrusted to us so that she may survive for future generations. This is why I wanted to begin with this reference to the Mother, to our motherland. If you are not patriots – not isolationist patriots – real patriots, you are not going to achieve anything in life. May you love your land, young men and women, love Chile; may you give your best for this Chile of yours.

In my work as a bishop, I came to see how many good ideas there are in young people, in their minds and hearts. And this is true, you are restless; you are seekers and idealists. Do you know who has problems? The problem we adults have is that, when we hear about those ideals, when we hear about these worries of the youth, like know-it-alls, we say: "They think that way because they are young; they still have to grow up", or worse, "they'll be corrupted". And it's true: behind those words "they still have to grow up", concealed against all the eagerness and dreams, there is the tacit "They'll be corrupted". Watch out for that! Maturing means growing and letting dreams grow and letting aspirations grow, not lowering your guard and allowing yourself to be bought for peanuts; that's not growing up. So when we adults think like that, don't pay any attention. As if in this phrase "they still have to grow up" said by us grown-ups, where it seems that we have thrown a wet blanket at you to make you keep quiet, there lies hidden the idea that

growing up means accepting injustice, believing that nothing can be done, that this is the way things have always been: “Why should we change if it was always this way, if this is always how people have done things?” That is corruption. Growing up, real maturity means carrying on with your dreams, together, sharing ideas, not letting your guard down, not selling your aspirations and such like. Is this clear? [*They answer: “Yes!”*].

Realizing how important young people and their experiences are, that is why we are calling ... [*he stops, because one of those in attendance is feeling unwell...*] Let’s just wait a moment for our sister who is feeling unwell, and let’s accompany her with a small prayer that she can recover quickly. It is for your reality, the youth, that I wanted to tell you I have called together a Synod for your faith and your discernment. And, in addition, the youth meeting; for we Bishops, we are the ones holding the Synod; we are thinking about the youth, but, you know, I worry about “filtering”, because sometimes in order to get young people’s opinions to Rome, you have to make several connections, and so the suggestions can arrive very “filtered”, not because of the airline companies, but because of those who transcribe the suggestions. That’s the reason I want to listen to the youth, and that’s why we are having the meeting of young people, a meeting where you are going to be the protagonists, young people from the whole world, Catholic and non-Catholic youth, Christian youth and youth from other religions, and young people who do not know if they believe or do not believe. All of them, to listen to you, to hear you directly, because it is important that you speak; do not let yourselves be silenced. It is up to us to help you be clear in what you are saying; that is the work we are going to help you with. But if you do not speak, how are we going to help? Speak courageously, and say what you feel. And so you are going to be able to do this in the week of meeting prior to Palm Sunday; delegations of young people are going to come from the whole world, so that we can help the Church have a young face. One of you, a little while back, said to me: “I do not know whether to speak of Holy Mother Church — he was speaking about a specific place — or Holy Grandmother Church”. No, the Church must have a young face, and you have to give it to us.

However, a young face is real, full of life, not by applying cosmetics. No, that's no good; rather she is young by letting herself be challenged deep down, and this is what we, what Holy Mother Church, needs from you today: that you challenge us. And so afterwards, get your answer ready, but we do need you to challenge us; the Church needs you to throw away the old-age identity card, the spiritually grown-upness, and have the courage to tell us: "I like that; this is the way I think we need to go; this doesn't work, this is not a bridge but a wall, and so forth". Tell us what you feel, what you think and develop this between yourselves and in groups at the meeting. Then this will go to the Synod where you will be certainly represented, reflecting all. So get ready for that meeting. To those going to the meeting, offer them your ideas, your concerns, what you feel in your heart. How much the Church in Chile needs you to "shake the ground beneath our feet" and help us draw closer to Jesus! This is what we ask of you, that you shake the ground beneath our fixed feet, and help us to be closer to Jesus. Your questions, wanting to know about you, your desire to be generous, are all necessary for us to draw closer to Jesus. All of us are invited, ever anew, to draw near to Jesus. If an activity, a pastoral plan, if this meeting does not help us to get closer to Jesus, we are wasting our time, wasting an afternoon and hours of preparation: may you help us get closer to Jesus. And we ask this of the one who can take us by the hand, let us look to our Mother; everyone in their heart tell her with words, tell her, who is the first disciple, may she help us get closer to Jesus, from the heart, each one of us.

Let me share a story with you. Chatting one day with a young man, I asked him what sort of things made him unhappy. "What makes you unhappy?" The context was right for this question. He said to me: "When my cellphone battery runs down or I lose my internet connection". I asked him: "Why?" He answered: "Father, it's simple; I miss out on everything that's going on, I am shut off from the world, stuck. In those moments, I jump up and run to find a charger or a Wi-Fi network and a password to reconnect".

That reply taught me something. It made me think that the same thing can happen with our faith. We are all enthusiasts, faith is renewed, be it through a retreat, a homily, a meeting, a Pope's visit;

faith grows. But after a while on the journey or after an initial spurt, there are moments when, without even realizing it, our “bandwidth” begins to fade, slowly, and that enthusiasm, that desire to stay connected to Jesus begins to also fade, and we start to lose our connection, our power; then we become unhappy and we lose our faith, we feel depressed and listless, and we start to view everything in a bad light. When we lack this “connection” that charges our dreams, our hearts begin to falter. When our batteries are dead, we feel the way the song describes it – “The background noise and the loneliness of the city cut us off from everything. The world turns backwards, tries to overwhelm me and drown all my thoughts and ideas”.¹ Has this ever happened to you? No, let each of you answer within their heart, I don’t want to embarrass those who have not felt this. It has happened to me.

Without a connection, a connection to Jesus, we end up drowning our thoughts and ideas, our dreams and our faith, and, naturally, we get frustrated and annoyed. As protagonists, which we are and we want to be — we can get to the point of feeling that it makes no difference whether or not we do anything. Why are you going to spend your energy? Look at the young pessimist. He says: “have a good time, leave all those things for we know how they end; the world doesn’t change, take it as it comes and go ahead”. We start feeling that we are “shut off” from reality, and from what is happening in the world. We remain shut off from the world, in “my little world” where I am peaceful on my sofa. It worries me that, once they have lost their “connection”, many people think they have nothing to offer; they feel lost. Stop there! You all have something to offer. Don’t look at things as a disaster. “I try to study, to have an academic title, get married, but enough, I don’t want hassles, it all ends up wrong”. This happens when you lose the connection. Never think that you have nothing to offer or that nobody cares about you. “Many people need you; think this”. Each of you think in your heart: “Many people need me”. The thought, “No one needs me”, as Alberto Hurtado used to like to say, “is the voice of the devil”, “no one needs me”. The devil wants to make you feel you are worthless... and to keep things the way they are. That’s why he makes you feel worthless, so that no one changes, because the only one that can make changes in society

is the young person, each of you. We are already on the other side. *[Another youth faints]. Thank you, because these youths fainting is a sign of what many of you are feeling. How long have you been here? [They reply].* Thank you! All of us are necessary and important and all of us have something to offer. With a little silence, each of you ask yourself: “What can I offer in life?” And how many of you want to say: “I don’t know”. You don’t know what you can offer? You have it inside but do not recognize it. Try to find it in order to offer it. The world needs you, the country needs you, society needs you, you do have something to give, don’t lose the connection.

The young people in the Gospel we heard today wanted that “connection”, they sought that connection to help them keep the flame alive in their hearts. Those young people that were there with John the Baptist, wanted to know how to charge the power cells of their heart. Andrew and the other disciple — whose name is not given, so we can imagine that each of us can be that “other” disciple — were looking for the password to connect with the one who is “the way, and the truth and the life” (*Jn 14:6*). It was John the Baptist who showed them the way. I believe that you too have a great saint who can be your guide, a saint who made his life into a song: “I am happy, Lord, I am happy”. Alberto Hurtado had a golden rule, a rule for setting his heart ablaze with the fire that keeps joy alive. For Jesus is that fire; everyone who draws near to it is set ablaze.

Hurtado’s password to reconnect and keep the signal was quite simple — surely none of you brought your phones? Really? I’d like you to key this into your phone, I’ll dictate it to you. Hurtado asks himself, and this is the password: “What would Christ do in my place?” Key this in: “What would Christ do in my place?” At school, at university, when outdoors, when at home, among friends, at work, when taunted: “What would Christ do in my place?” When you go dancing, when you are playing or watching sports: “What would Christ do in my place?” This is the password, the power source that charges our hearts, ignites our faith and makes the sparkle in our eyes never fade. That is what it means to be a protagonist of history. Our eyes sparkle, for we have discovered that Jesus is the source of life and joy. Protagonists of

history, for we wish to pass on that sparkle to hearts that have grown so cold and gloomy that they have forgotten what it means to hope, to all those hearts that are “deadened” and wait for someone to come and challenge them with something worthwhile. Being protagonists means doing what Jesus did. Wherever you are, whomever you are with, and whenever you get together: “What would Jesus do?” “Did you key in the password?” [*They reply: “yes”*] The only way not to forget the password is by using it, otherwise it might happen that... I’ll tell you something from my time, not yours, but you might recognize some truth in it. It’s what happened to three mad persons in that film where there is a robbery, the safe and everything is thought out. But when they get there they forget the password, they forget the key. This is what happens when the password is not used over and over again. If you don’t use it, you forget it. What was the password? [*They reply: “What would Jesus do in my place?”*] That’s the password. Repeat it but also use it! What would Christ do in my place? Use it every day. The time will come when you know it, and the day will come when, without realizing it, your heart will beat like Jesus’ heart.

It is not enough to hear a sermon or learn an answer from the catechism; we want to live the way Jesus lived. What would Jesus do in my place? To translate Jesus into my life. To do that, the young people in the Gospel asked: “Lord, where do you live?” (*Jn 1:38*). How do you live? Do I ask Jesus this? We want to live like Jesus, with that “yes” that thrills our hearts.

It thrills the heart and sets you on a risky path. To put oneself on the line, to run risks. Dear friends, be courageous, go out straightaway to meet your friends, people you don’t know, or those having troubles. Go out with the only promise we have: that wherever you are — in the desert, on the journey, amid excitement, you will always be “connected”; there will always be a “power source”. We will never be alone. We will always enjoy the company of Jesus, his Mother and a community. Certainly, a community is not perfect, but that does not mean that it does not have much to love and to give to others. What was the password? [*They reply: “What would Christ do in my place?”*] That’s good. You still have it.

Dear friends, dear young people, I ask you please, Be young Samaritans, who never walk past anyone lying on the roadside. In your heart, another question: “Have I ever left someone lying on the roadside? A relative, a friend?” Be Samaritans, never abandon the person left lying on the roadside. Be young Simons of Cyrene who help Christ carry his cross and help alleviate the sufferings of your brothers and sisters. Be like Zacchaeus, who turned his dwarfed spirituality into greatness and allowed Jesus to transform his materialistic heart into one of solidarity. Be like young Mary Magdalene, passionately seeking love, who finds in Jesus alone the answers she needs. Have the heart of Peter, so that you can abandon your nets beside the lake. Have the love of John, so that you can rest all your concerns in him. Have the openness of our Mother, the first disciple, so that you can sing for joy and do God’s will.²

Dear friends, I would have liked to stay longer. Those of you who have a cellphone hold it in your hand; a sign to not forget the password. What was it? [*They reply: “What would Christ do in my place?”*] Get connected in this way and don’t ever lose the signal. I would like to stay longer. Thank you for the meeting and thank you for your joyfulness. Thank you and I ask you please to not forget to pray for me.

Notes

¹ LA LEY, *Aquí*.

² CARD. RAÚL SILVA HENRÍQUEZ, *Mensaje a los jóvenes* (7 October 1979).

VISIT TO THE PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CHILE

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Wednesday, 17 January 2018

Grand Chancellor, Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati, My Brothers Bishops, President Dr Ignacio Sánchez, Distinguished University Authorities, Dear Professors, Administrators, University Personnel, Dear Students,

I am happy to be here with you at this House of Studies, which in its 130 years of life has rendered a priceless service to the country. I thank the President for his words of welcome on behalf of all, and for everything you do with such wisdom to administer the University and defend courageously the identity of the Catholic University. Thank you.

The history of this university is in some sense woven into the history of Chile. Thousands of men and women who were educated here have made significant contributions to the development of the nation. I would like especially to mention Saint Albert Hurtado, who began his studies here a century ago. His life is a clear testimony to how intelligence, academic excellence and professionalism, when joined to faith, justice and charity, far from weakening, attain a prophetic power capable of opening horizons and pointing the way, especially for those on the margins of society, particularly in our day where a throwaway culture prevails.

In this regard, I would like to take up your words, dear President, when you said: “We have important challenges for our country that have to do with *peaceful coexistence as a nation* and the ability to *progress as a community*”.

1. *Peaceful coexistence as a nation.*

To speak of challenges is to acknowledge that situations have reached

the point where they need to be rethought. What was hitherto an element of unity and cohesion now calls for new responses. The accelerated pace and a sense of disorientation before new processes and changes in our societies call for a serene but urgent reflection that is neither naïve nor utopian, much less arbitrary. This has nothing to do with curbing the growth of knowledge, but rather with making the University a privileged space for “putting into practice the grammar of dialogue, which shapes encounter”.¹ For “true wisdom [is] the fruit of reflection, dialogue and generous encounter between persons”.²

Peaceful coexistence as a nation is possible, not least to the extent that we can generate educational processes that are also transformative, inclusive and meant to favour such coexistence. Educating for peaceful coexistence does not mean simply attaching values to the work of education, but rather establishing a dynamic of coexistence within the very system of education itself. It is not so much a question of content but of teaching how to think and reason in an integrated way. What was traditionally called *forma mentis*.

To achieve this, it is necessary to develop an “integrating literacy” capable of encompassing the processes of change now taking place in our societies.

This literacy process requires working simultaneously to integrate the different languages that constitute us as persons. That is to say, an education (literacy) that integrates and harmonizes intellect, affections and hands, that is to say, head, heart and action. This will offer students a growth that is harmonious not only at the personal level, but also at the level of society. We urgently need to create spaces where fragmentation is not the guiding principle, even for thinking. To do this, it is necessary to teach how to reflect on what we are feeling and doing; to feel what we are thinking and doing; to do what we are thinking and feeling. An interplay of capacities at the service of the person and society.

Literacy, based on the integration of the distinct languages that shape us, will engage students in their own educational process, a process that will prepare them to face the challenges of the near future. The

“divorce” of fields of learning from languages, and illiteracy with regard to integrating the distinct dimensions of life, bring only fragmentation and social breakdown.

In this “liquid” society³ or “society of lightness”,⁴ as various thinkers have termed it, those points of reference that people use to build themselves individually and socially are disappearing. It seems that the new meeting place of today is the “cloud”, which is characterized by instability since everything evaporates and thus loses consistency.

Such lack of consistency may be one of the reasons for the loss of a consciousness of the importance of public life, which requires a minimum ability to transcend private interests (living longer and better) in order to build upon foundations that reveal that crucial dimension of our life which is “us”. Without that consciousness, but especially without that feeling and consequently without that experience, it is very difficult to build the nation. As a result, the only thing that appears to be important and valid is what pertains to the individual, and all else becomes irrelevant. A culture of this sort has lost its memory, lost the bonds that support it and make its life possible. Without the “us” of a people, of a family and of a nation, but also the “us” of the future, of our children and of tomorrow, without the “us” of a city that transcends “me” and is richer than individual interests, life will be not only increasingly fragmented, but also more conflictual and violent.

The university, in this context, is challenged to generate within its own precincts new processes that can overcome every fragmentation of knowledge and stimulate a true *universitas*.

2. Progressing as a community.

Hence, the second key element for this House of Studies: the ability to progress as a community.

I was pleased to learn of the evangelizing outreach and the joyful vitality of your university chaplaincy, which is a sign of a young, lively Church that “goes forth”. The missions that take place each year in different parts of the country are an impressive and enriching reality.

With these, you are able to broaden your outlook and encounter different situations that, along with regular events, keep you on the move. “Missionaries”, in the etymological sense of the word, are never equal to the mission; they learn to be sensitive to God’s pace through their encounter with all sorts of people who they either did not know, did not have daily contact with or were at a distance.

Such experiences cannot remain isolated from the life of the university. The classic methods of research are experiencing certain limits, more so when it is a question of a culture such as ours, which stimulates direct and immediate participation by all. Present-day culture demands new forms that are more inclusive of all those who make up social and hence educational realities. We see, then, the importance of broadening the concept of the educating community.

The challenge for the community is to not isolate itself from modes of knowledge, or, for that matter, to develop a body of knowledge with minimal concern about those for whom it is intended. It is vital that the acquisition of knowledge lead to an interplay between the university classroom and the wisdom of the peoples who make up this richly blessed land. That wisdom is full of intuitions and perceptions that cannot be overlooked when we think of Chile. An enriching synergy will thus come about between scientific rigour and popular insight; the close interplay of these two parts will prevent a divorce between reason and action, between thinking and feeling, between knowing and living, between profession and service. Knowledge must always sense that it is at the service of life, and must confront it directly in order to keep progressing. Hence, the educational community cannot be reduced to classrooms and libraries but must progress continually towards participation. This dialogue can only take place on the basis of an *episteme* capable of “thinking in the plural”, that is, conscious of the interdisciplinary and interdependent nature of learning. “In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed”.⁵

The educational community can enjoy an endless number of possibilities and potentialities if it allows itself to be enriched and challenged by all who are part of the educational enterprise. This requires an increased concern for quality and integration. For the service that the university offers must always aim for quality and excellence in the service of national coexistence. We could say that the university becomes a laboratory for the future of the country, insofar as it succeeds in embodying the life and progress of the people, and can overcome every antagonistic and elitist approach to learning.

An ancient cabalistic tradition says that evil originates in the rift produced in the human being by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Knowledge thus gained the upper hand over creation, subjecting it to its own designs and desires.⁶ This will always be a subtle temptation in every academic setting: to reduce creation to certain interpretative models that deprive it of the very Mystery that has moved whole generations to seek what is just, good, beautiful and true. Whenever a “professor”, by virtue of his wisdom, becomes a “teacher”, he is then truly capable of awakening wonderment in our students. Wonderment at the world and at an entire universe waiting to be discovered!

In our day, the mission entrusted to you is prophetic. You are challenged to generate processes that enlighten contemporary culture by proposing a renewed humanism that eschews any form of reductionism. This prophetic role demanded of us prompts us to seek out ever new spaces for dialogue rather than confrontation, spaces of encounter rather than division, paths of friendly disagreement that allow for respectful differences between persons joined in a sincere effort to advance as a community towards a renewed national coexistence.

If you ask for this, I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit will guide your steps, so that this House will continue to bear fruit for the good of the Chilean people and for the glory of God.

I thank you once again for this meeting, and please I ask you to remember to pray for me.

Notes

- ¹ *Address to the Plenary of the Congregation for Catholic Education* (9 February 2017).
- ² Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 47.
- ³ Cf. ZYGMUNT BAUMAN, *Modernidad líquida*, 1999.
- ⁴ Cf. GILLES LIPOVETSKY, *De la ligereza*, 2016.
- ⁵ Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 146.
- ⁶ Cf. GERSHOM SCHOLEM, *La mystique juive*, Paris, 1985, 86.

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MASS OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND PRAYER FOR CHILE

Lobito Campus (Iquique)
Thursday, 18 January 2018

Homily of the Holy Father

“Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee” (*Jn 2:11*).

These are the final words of the Gospel we just heard, which describes Jesus’ public appearance: at a party, no more or less. It could not be otherwise, since the Gospel is a constant invitation to joy. From the outset, the angel says to Mary: “Rejoice!” (*Lk 1:28*). Rejoice, he says to the shepherds; rejoice, he says to Elizabeth, an elderly and barren woman...; rejoice, Jesus says to the thief, for this day you will be with me in paradise (cf. *Lk 23:43*).

The Gospel message is a wellspring of joy: “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (*Jn 15:11*). A joy that is contagious, passing from generation to generation, a joy that we have inherited. Because we are Christians.

How much you know about this, dear brothers and sisters of northern Chile! How much you know about living your faith and your lives in a festive spirit! I have come as a pilgrim to join you in celebrating this beautiful way of living the faith. Your patronal feasts, your religious dances – which at times even go on for a week – your music, your dress, all make this region a shrine of popular piety and spirituality. Because the party does not remain inside the Church, but you turn the whole town into a party. You know how to celebrate by singing and dancing God’s “fatherhood, providence, constant and loving presence”, and this engenders “interior attitudes rarely observed to the same degree in those who do not have this religious sense: namely, patience, the sign of the cross in daily life, detachment,

openness to others, devotion”.¹ The words of the prophet Isaiah come to life: “The wilderness shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field will be deemed a forest” (*Is* 32:15). This land, surrounded by the driest desert of the world, manages to put on party clothes.

In this festive atmosphere, the Gospel shows us how Mary acts to make that joy continue. She is attentive to everything going on around her; like a good mother, she doesn't sit still. So she notices, amid in the party and the shared joy, that something is about to happen that might “water it down”. She approaches her Son and tells him simply: “They have no wine” (*Jn* 2:3).

In the same way, Mary passes through our towns, our streets, our squares, our homes and our hospitals. Mary is the Virgin of la Tirana; the Virgin Ayquina in Calama; the Virgin of the Rocks in Arica. She notices all those problems that burden our hearts, then whispers into Jesus' ear and says: Look, “they have no wine”.

Mary does not remain quiet. She goes up to the servants and says to them: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5). Mary, a woman of few but very pointed words, also comes up to each of us and says simply: “Do whatever he tells you”. In this way, she elicits the first miracle of Jesus: to make his friends feel that they too are part of the miracle. Because Christ “came to this world not to perform a task by himself, but with us” – he performs miracles with us – “with all of us, so as to be the head of a great body, of which we are the living, free and active cells”.² This is how Jesus performs miracles: with us.

The miracle begins once the servants approach the jars with water for purification. So too, each of us can begin the miracle; what is more, each one of us is invited to be part of the miracle for others.

Brothers and sisters, Iquique is a land of dreams (for so its name means in the Aymara language). It is a land that has given shelter to men and women of different peoples and cultures who had to leave everything behind and set out. Setting out always with the hope of obtaining a better life, yet, as we know, always with their bags packed with fear and uncertainty about the future. Iquique is a region of

immigrants, which reminds us of the greatness of men and women, entire families, who, in the face of adversity, refused to give up and set out in search of life. In search of life. They – especially those who had to leave their land for lack of life's bare necessities – are an image of the Holy Family, which had to cross deserts to keep on living.

This land is a land of dreams, but let us work to ensure that it also continues to be a land of hospitality. A festive hospitality, for we know very well that there is no Christian joy when doors are closed; there is no Christian joy when others are made to feel unwanted, when there is no room for them in our midst (cf. *Lk 16:19-31*).

Like Mary at Cana, let us make an effort to be more attentive in our squares and towns, to notice those whose lives have been “watered down”, who have lost – or have been robbed of – reasons for celebrating; those whose hearts are saddened. And let us not be afraid to raise our voices and say: “They have no wine”. The cry of the people of God, the cry of the poor, is a kind of prayer; it opens our hearts and teaches us to be attentive. Let us be attentive, then, to all situations of injustice and to new forms of exploitation that risk making so many of our brothers and sisters miss the joy of the party. Let us be attentive to the lack of steady employment, which destroys lives and homes. Let us be attentive to those who profit from the irregular status of many migrants who don't know the language or who don't have their papers “in order”. Let us be attentive to the lack of shelter, land and employment experienced by so many families. And, like Mary, let us say: They have no wine, Lord.

Like the servants at the party, let us offer what we have, little as it may seem. Like them, let us not be afraid to “lend a hand”. May our solidarity in the commitment for justice be part of the dance or song that we can offer to our Lord. Let us also make the most of the opportunity to learn and make our own the values, the wisdom and the faith that migrants bring with them. Without being closed to those “jars” so full of wisdom and history brought by those who continue to come to these lands. Let us not deprive ourselves of all the good that they have to contribute.

And let us allow Jesus to complete the miracle by turning our communities and our hearts into living signs of his presence, which is joyful and festive because we have experienced that God is with us, because we have learned to make room for him within our hearts. A contagious joy and festivity that lead us to exclude no one from the proclamation of this Good News, and to share all that belongs to our original culture, in order to enrich it also with what is truly ours, with our own traditions, with our ancestral wisdom, so that those who come may encounter wisdom and share their own. This is the celebration. This is the water transformed into wine. This is the miracle that Jesus performs.

May Mary, under her different titles in this blessed land of the north, continue to whisper in the ear of Jesus, her Son: “They have no wine”, and may her words continue to find a place in us: “Do whatever he tells you”.

Notes

¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 48.

² SAINT ALBERTO HURTADO, *Meditación Semana Santa para jóvenes* (1946).

Farewell

At the conclusion of this celebration, I thank Bishop Guillermo Vera Soto of Iquique for his gracious words on behalf of his brother bishops and all God’s people. This feels like a farewell.

I renew my gratitude to President Michelle Bachelet for her invitation to visit the country. In a special way, I thank everyone who helped make this visit possible: the civil authorities and all those whose

professionalism enabled us to enjoy this time of encounter.

I also thank the thousands of volunteers for their selfless and silent work. Over twenty thousand. Without their commitment and hard work the jars of water would have not been here for the Lord to perform the miracle of bringing us the wine of joy. Thanks too, to all those who in so many ways accompanied this pilgrimage, especially with their prayers. I know the sacrifices you have had to make in order to take part in our celebrations and gatherings. I appreciate this and I thank you from my heart. I also thank the members of the planning commission. All of you have worked hard, so many thanks.

I now continue my pilgrimage towards Peru, a country that is a friend and brother to this great nation of Chile, which we are called to cherish and uphold. It is a nation that finds its beauty in the many and varied faces of her people.

Dear brothers and sisters, at every Eucharist we pray: “Look, Lord, on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will”. What more can I ask for you at the end of my visit than to say to the Lord: Look at the faith of this people and grant them unity and peace!

Thank you, and I ask you, please, to remember to pray for me. I am grateful for the presence of so many pilgrims from the brother nations, Bolivia, Peru, and please don't be jealous, but especially Argentines, because Argentina is my homeland. Thank you to my Argentinean brothers and sisters who have accompanied me in Santiago, Temuco and here in Iquique. Many thanks.

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MEETING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF AMAZONIA

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Coliseo Regional Madre de Dios (Puerto Maldonado)
Friday, 19 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here with you, I feel welling up within me the song of Saint Francis: “Praise be to you, my Lord!” Yes, praise be to you for the opportunity you have given us in this encounter. Thank you, Bishop David Martínez de Aguirre Guinea, Hector, Yésica and María Luisa, for your words of welcome and for your witness talks. In you, I would like to thank and greet all the inhabitants of Amazonia.

I see that you come from the different native peoples of Amazonia: Harakbut, Esse-ejas, Matsiguenkas, Yines, Shipibos, Asháninkas. Yaneshas, Kakintes, Nahuas, Yaminahuas, Juni Kuin, Madijá, Manchineris, Kukamas, Kandozi, Quichuas, Huitotos, Shawis, Achuar, Boras, Awajún, Wampís, and others. I also see that among us are peoples from the Andes who came to the forest and became Amazonians. I have greatly looked forward to this meeting. I wanted to begin my visit to Peru here. Thank you for being here and for helping us to see closer up, in your faces, the reflection of this land. It is a diverse face, one of infinite variety and enormous biological, cultural and spiritual richness. Those of us who do not live in these lands need your wisdom and knowledge to enable us to enter into, without destroying, the treasures that this region holds. And to hear an echo of the words that the Lord spoke to Moses: “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground” (*Ex 3:5*).

Allow me to say once again: Praise to you, Lord, for your marvellous handiwork in your Amazonian peoples and for all the biodiversity that these lands embrace!

This song of praise is cut short when we learn about, and see, the deep wounds that Amazonia and its peoples bear. I wanted to come to visit you and listen to you, so that we can stand together, in the heart of the Church, and share your challenges and reaffirm with you a heartfelt option for the defence of life, the defence of the earth and the defence of cultures.

The native Amazonian peoples have probably never been so threatened on their own lands as they are at present. Amazonia is being disputed on various fronts. On the one hand, there is neo-extractivism and the pressure being exerted by great business interests that want to lay hands on its petroleum, gas, wood, gold and forms of agro-industrial monocultivation. On the other hand, its lands are being threatened by the distortion of certain policies aimed at the “conservation” of nature without taking into account the men and women, specifically you, my Amazonian brothers and sisters, who inhabit it. We know of movements that, under the guise of preserving the forest, hoard great expanses of woodland and negotiate with them, leading to situations of oppression for the native peoples; as a result, they lose access to the land and its natural resources. These problems strangle her peoples and provoke the migration of the young due to the lack of local alternatives. We have to break with the historical paradigm that views Amazonia as an inexhaustible source of supplies for other countries without concern for its inhabitants.

I consider it essential to begin creating institutional expressions of respect, recognition and dialogue with the native peoples, acknowledging and recovering their native cultures, languages, traditions, rights and spirituality. An intercultural dialogue in which you yourselves will be “the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting your land are proposed”.¹ Recognition and dialogue will be the best way to transform relationships whose history is marked by exclusion and discrimination.

At the same time, it is right to acknowledge the existence of promising initiatives coming from your own communities and organizations, which advocate that the native peoples and communities

themselves be the guardians of the woodlands. The resources that conservation practices generate would then revert to benefit your families, improve your living conditions and promote health and education in your communities. This form of “doing good” is in harmony with the practices of “good living” found in the wisdom of our peoples. Allow me to state that if, for some, you are viewed as an obstacle or a hindrance, the fact is your lives cry out against a style of life that is oblivious to its own real cost. You are a living memory of the mission that God has entrusted to us all: the protection of our common home.

The defence of the earth has no other purpose than the defence of life. We know of the suffering caused for some of you by emissions of hydrocarbons, which gravely threaten the lives of your families and contaminate your natural environment.

Along the same lines, there exists another devastating assault on life linked to this environmental contamination favoured by illegal mining. I am speaking of human trafficking: slave labour and sexual abuse. Violence against adolescents and against women cries out to heaven. “I have always been distressed at the lot of those who are victims of various kinds of human trafficking. How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry, ‘Where is your brother?’ (*Gen 4:9*). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Let us not pretend and look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think. This issue involves everyone!”²

How can we fail to remember Saint Turibius, who stated with dismay in the Third Council of Lima “that not only in times past were great wrongs and acts of coercion done to these poor people, but in our own time many seek to do the same...” (Session III, c. 3). Sadly, five centuries later, these words remain timely. The prophetic words of those men of faith – as Hector and Yèsica reminded us – are the cry of this people, which is often silenced or not allowed to speak. That prophecy must remain alive in our Church, which will never stop pleading for the outcast and those who suffer.

This concern gives rise to our basic option for the life of the most

defenceless. I am thinking of the peoples referred to as “Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation” (PIAV). We know that they are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. Their primitive lifestyle made them isolated even from their own ethnic groups; they went into seclusion in the most inaccessible reaches of the forest in order to live in freedom. Continue to defend these most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Their presence reminds us that we cannot use goods meant for all as consumerist greed dictates. Limits have to be set that can help preserve us from all plans for a massive destruction of the habitat that makes us who we are.

The recognition of these people – who can never be considered a minority, but rather authentic dialogue partners – as of all the native peoples, reminds us that we are not the absolute owners of creation. We need urgently to appreciate the essential contribution that they bring to society as a whole, and not reduce their cultures to an idealized image of a natural state, much less a kind of museum of a bygone way of life. Their cosmic vision and their wisdom, have much to teach those of us who are not part of their culture. All our efforts to improve the lives of the Amazonian peoples will prove too little. We hear disturbing reports about the spread of certain diseases. The silence is alarming and deadly. By remaining silent, we fail to work for prevention, especially among adolescents and young people, and to ensure treatment, thus condemning the sick to a cruel ostracism. We call upon states to implement policies of intercultural health that take into account the experience and the worldview of the native people, training professionals from each ethnic group who can deal with the disease in the context of their own worldview. As I pointed out in *Laudato Si'*, once again we need to speak out against the pressure applied to certain countries by international organizations that promote sterilization policies. These are particularly directed at the native peoples. We know too that the practice of sterilizing women, at times without their knowledge, continues to be promoted.

The culture of our peoples is a sign of life. Amazonia is not only a reserve of biodiversity but also a cultural reserve that must be preserved in the face of the new forms of colonialism. The family is – as one of you

said – and always has been, the social institution that has most contributed to keeping our cultures alive. In moments of past crisis, in the face of various forms of imperialism, the families of the original peoples have been the best defence of life. Special care is demanded of us, lest we allow ourselves to be ensnared by ideological forms of colonialism, disguised as progress, that slowly but surely dissipate cultural identities and establish a uniform, single... and weak way of thinking. Please listen to the elderly. They possess a wisdom that puts them in contact with the transcendent and makes them see what is essential in life. Let us not forget that “the disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal”.³ The one way for cultures not to disappear is for them to keep alive and in constant movement. How important is what Yésica and Hector told us: “We want our children to study, but we don’t want the school to erase our traditions, our languages; we don’t want to forget our ancestral wisdom!”

Education helps us to build bridges and to create a culture of encounter. Schooling and education for the native peoples must be a priority and commitment of the state: an integrated and inculturated commitment that recognizes, respects and integrates their ancestral wisdom as a treasure belonging to the whole nation, as María Luzmila made clear to us.

I ask my brother bishops to continue, as they are doing even in the remotest places in the forest, to encourage intercultural and bilingual education in the schools, in institutions of teacher training, and in the universities.⁴ I express my appreciation of the initiatives that the Amazonian Church in Peru helps carry out in favour of the native peoples. These include schools, student residences, centres of research and development like the José Pio Aza Cultural Centre, CAAAP and CETA, and new and important intercultural projects like NOPOKI, aimed expressly at training young people from the different ethnic groups of our Amazonia.

I likewise support all those young men and women of the native peoples who are trying to create from their own standpoint a new

anthropology, and working to reinterpret the history of their peoples from their own perspective. I also encourage those who through art, literature, craftsmanship and music show the world your worldview and your cultural richness. Much has been written and spoken about you. It is good that you are now the ones to define yourselves and show us your identity. We need to listen to you.

Dear brothers and sisters of Amazonia, how many missionaries, men and women, have devoted themselves to your peoples and defended your cultures! They did so inspired by the Gospel. Christ himself took flesh in a culture, the Jewish culture, and from it, he gave us himself as a source of newness for all peoples, in such a way that each, in its own deepest identity, feels itself affirmed in him. Do not yield to those attempts to uproot the Catholic faith from your peoples.⁵ Each culture and each worldview that receives the Gospel enriches the Church by showing a new aspect of Christ's face. The Church is not alien to your problems and your lives, she does not want to be aloof from your way of life and organization. We need the native peoples to shape the culture of the local churches in Amazonia. And in this regard, it gave me great joy to hear that one of *Laudato Si*'s passages was read by a permanent deacon of your own culture. Help your bishops, and help your men and women missionaries, to be one with you, and in this way, by an inclusive dialogue, to shape a Church with an Amazonian face, a Church with a native face. In this spirit, I have convoked a Synod for Amazonia in 2019 whose first meeting, as the pre-Synodal Council, will be held here this afternoon.

I trust in your peoples' capacity for resilience and your ability to respond to these difficult times in which you live. You have shown this at different critical moments in your history, with your contributions and with your differentiated vision of human relations, with the natural environment and your way of living the faith.

I pray for you, and for this land blessed by God, and I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

Many thanks!

Tinkunakama (Quechua: Until we meet again).

Notes

- ¹ Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 146.
- ² Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 211.
- ³ Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 145.
- ⁴ Cf. FIFTH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN BISHOPS, *Aparecida Document* (29 June 2007), 530.
- ⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 531.

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MEETING WITH THE POPULATION

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER

Jorge Basadre Institute (Puerto Maldonado)
Friday, 19 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I see that you have come not only from the far reaches of the Peruvian Amazon, but also from the Andes and neighbouring countries. What a beautiful image of the Church without borders, where all peoples have a place! How much we need moments like these, to be together and, regardless of our place of origin, to inspire us to build a culture of encounter that renews us in hope.

I thank Bishop David for his words of welcome. I also thank Arturo and Margarita for sharing their experiences with us. They said: “You are visiting a land that is mostly forgotten, wounded and marginalized... but we are not a no man’s land”. Thank you for saying this: we are not a no man’s land. It is something that needs to be emphasized. You are not a no man’s land. This land has names. It has faces. It has you.

This area has a beautiful name: *Madre de Dios*, Mother of God. How can I not speak of Mary, a young woman who lived in a remote, isolated village, also considered by many to be a “no man’s land”. There she received the greatest greeting and invitation imaginable: to be the Mother of God. There are joys that only little ones can hear (cf. *Mt* 11:25).

You have in Mary not only an example to whom you can look, *but also a Mother*. Wherever there is a mother, we don’t have that terrible feeling of belonging to no one, that takes hold when our sense of belonging to a family, to a people, to a land, to our God, begins to fade. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the first thing I would like to say, and I want to say it loud and clear: This is not a land of orphans, but a land that has a Mother! And if it has a mother, it has sons and daughters, a

family, a community. Where there is a mother, a family and a community, problems may not disappear, but we certainly find the strength to confront them differently.

It is painful to think that some want to reject this certainty and make Madre de Dios a nameless land, without children, a barren land. A place easy to commercialize and exploit. That is why it is good for us to repeat in our homes and communities, and in the depths of each of our hearts: This is not a land of orphans! It has a Mother! This good news has been passed on from generation to generation thanks to the efforts of so many who share this gift of knowing that we are God's children and who help us to know one another as brothers and sisters.

On a number of occasions, I have spoken of the throwaway culture. A culture that is not satisfied with exclusion, as we have grown accustomed to observe, but advances by silencing, ignoring and throwing out everything that does not serve its interests; as if the alienating consumerism of some is completely unaware of the desperate suffering of others. It is an anonymous culture, without bonds, without faces, a throwaway culture. It is a motherless culture that only wants to consume. The earth is treated in accordance with this logic. Forests, rivers and streams are exploited mercilessly, then left barren and unusable. Persons are also treated in the same way: they are used until someone gets tired of them, then abandoned as "useless". This is the throwaway culture, it throws away children, it throws away the elderly. As I was being driven around the crowd, there was an elderly lady, 97 years of age. Should we throw away that grandmother? What do you think? No, because she is a grandmother full of the wisdom of her people. Let us applaud the 97-year-old grandmother!

Speaking of these things, allow me to bring up another painful subject. We become accustomed to using the term "human trafficking". Upon arriving at Puerto Maldonado, at the airport I saw a sign that struck me: "Be on the watch for human trafficking". This is a sign of growing awareness. But in truth we should speak of slavery: slavery for work, sexual slavery, slavery for profit. It is painful to see how in this land, which is under the protection of the Mother of God, so many

women are devalued, denigrated and exposed to endless violence. Violence cannot be seen as “normal”. Violence against women cannot be treated as “normal”, maintaining a culture of machismo blind to the leading role that women play in our communities. It is not right for us, brothers and sisters, to look the other way and let the dignity of so many women, especially young women, be trampled upon.

Many people have immigrated to Amazonia in search of housing, land and work. They come in search of a better future for themselves and their families. They abandon poor, yet worthy lives. Many of them, in the hope that certain jobs will bring an end to their precarious situations, are drawn by the promising allure of gold mining. But let us not forget that gold can turn into a false god which demands human sacrifices.

False gods, the idols of avarice, money and power, corrupt everything. They corrupt people and institutions, and they ruin the forest. Jesus said that there are demons that require much prayer to expel. This is one of them. I encourage you to continue organizing into movements and communities of every kind in order to help overcome these situations. I likewise encourage you to gather, as people of faith and vibrant ecclesial communities, around the person of Jesus. Through heartfelt prayer and hope-filled encounter with Christ, we will be able to attain the conversion that leads us to true life. Jesus promised us true life, authentic life, eternal life. Not a make-believe life, like the one offered by all those dazzling false promises; they promise life but end up leading us to death.

Brothers and sisters, salvation is not something generic, it is not abstract. Our Father looks at real people, with real faces and concrete histories. Every Christian community must be a reflection of that gaze, that presence that creates bonds and generates family and community. It is a way of making visible the kingdom of heaven, in communities where everyone feels a part of the whole, where they feel called by name and encouraged to be a builder of life for others.

I have hope in you...moreover, going round I saw many young persons and where there is youth, there we see hope. I have hope in you. Thank

you. in the hearts of all those people who seek a blessed life. You have come to seek that life here, amid one of the most exuberant explosions of life on our planet. Love this land, realize that it belongs to you. Breathe it in, listen to it, marvel at it. Fall in love with this land called *Madre de Dios*, commit yourself to it and care for it and defend it. Do not use this land as a mere disposable object, but as a genuine treasure to be enjoyed, cultivated and entrusted to your children.

Let us commend ourselves to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, and place ourselves under her protection. Please, don't forget to pray for me. I now invite you to pray together to the Mother of God.

Hail Mary...

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VISIT TO “HOGAR PRINCIPITO” CHILDREN'S HOME

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Puerto Maldonado
Friday, 19 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Dear Children,

Thank you very much for this lovely reception and for your words of welcome. Seeing you sing, seeing you dance makes me very happy. Thank you.

When I was told about the existence of “The Little Prince” Home and the Apronia Foundation, I felt that I could not leave Puerto Maldonado without greeting you. You wanted to come from various homes to meet here in the *Little Prince Home*. Thank you for the efforts you made to be here today.

Not long ago, we celebrated Christmas. Our hearts were touched by the image of the Child Jesus. He is our treasure. You children are the reflection and a treasure for all of us, the most beautiful treasure that we have, and one that we are called to guard. Forgive us those times when we adults have not cared for you, and when we did not give you the importance you deserve. When you grow up, don't forget. Your faces, your lives constantly demand a greater commitment and effort on our part, lest we become blind or indifferent to all those other children who suffer and are in need. Without a doubt, you are the greatest treasure that we have to care for.

Dear children of the *Little Prince Home* and young people from the other homes. Sometimes, at night, some of you feel sad. You miss your father and mother who are not here, and I know too that sometimes you feel very hurt. Dirsey, you were brave and you shared that with us. You told me; “I hope my message may be a light of hope”. But let me tell you something. Your life, your words, and the lives of all of you, are a light of hope. I want to thank you for your witness. Thank you for being a

light of hope for all of us.

I am happy to see that you have a home where you are welcomed, and where, with affection and friendship, there are people who help you to see that God takes you by the hand and puts dreams in your heart. This is wonderful.

What a wonderful witness, too, is offered by all of you young people who have travelled this road, who found love in this home and now are able to shape your own future! You demonstrate to all of us the enormous potential of each person. For these boys and girls, you are the best example to follow, a sign of hope that they will be able to do the same. We all need good role models: children need to look to the future and have positive role models. They need to think and say: “I want to be like him, I want to be like her”. Everything that you young people can do, like coming here to be with them, to play and spend time together, is important. Be for them, as the Little Prince says: *the little stars that light up the night* (cf. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, XXIV; XXVI).

Some of you young people here come from native communities. Sadly, you have seen the destruction of the woodlands. Your elders taught you to discover them; there they found their food and the medicine that brought them healing. You showed us this at the beginning here. Today those woodlands have been laid waste by the intoxication of a misguided notion of progress. The rivers that hosted your games and provided you with food are now muddied, contaminated, dead. Young people, do not be resigned to what is happening! Do not renounce the legacy you have received from your elders, or your lives and dreams.

I would like to encourage you to study. Get an education, take advantage of the opportunities you have for schooling, this opportunity that the Apronia Foundation offers you. The world needs you, young men and women of the first peoples, and it needs you, not disguised, but as you are. Not disguised as citizens from another land, no, as you are, that's how we need you. Do not be content to be the last car on the train of society, letting yourselves be pulled along and eventually disconnected. No, never be the last car. We need you to be the engine,

always pressing forward. And I offer you some advice: listen to your elders; value their traditions; do not curb your curiosity. Get in touch with your roots, but at the same time open your eyes to new things; bring the old and the new together in your own way. Share what you learn with the world, because the world needs you to be yourselves, who you really are, and not an imitation of someone else. We need you to be authentic, young men and women who are proud to belong to the Amazonian peoples and who can offer humanity an alternative for a true life. My friends, society often needs to correct its course and you, the young of the first peoples, can help greatly – of this I am sure – to meet this challenge, above all by teaching us a way of life based on protection and care, not on the destruction of everything that stands in the way of our greed.

And one of the main things, also, is that I want to thank Father Xavier [Arbex de Morsier, founder of the Apronia Association]. Father Xavier has suffered much and given a lot to this work: quite simply, thank you, thank you for your example. I want to thank the religious brothers and sisters, the lay missionaries who are doing such wonderful work, and all the benefactors who are part of this family. I also thank the volunteers whose gift of time is like a balm soothing every wound. Likewise, I thank all those who confirm these young people in their Amazonian identity and help them to forge a better future for their communities and for our entire world.

And now, just as we are, let us close our eyes and ask God to give us his blessing.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he let his face shine upon you and show you his mercy. May he turn his countenance towards you and give you his peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen (cf. Num 6:24-26; Ps 67; Blessing in Ordinary Time).

Let me ask you two things. To pray for me and to not forget that you are *the little stars that light up the night*.

MEETING WITH AUTHORITIES, THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Government Palace's Honour Yard (Lima)
Friday, 19 January 2018

Mr President, Members of the Government and the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Authorities, Representatives of Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I arrive at this historic edifice, I thank God once again for this opportunity to be on Peruvian soil. I would like my words to be a message of greeting and esteem for each of the sons and daughters of this people, that down the years has preserved and enriched the wisdom handed down by its forebears and represents, indeed, one of its greatest legacies.

I thank Mr Pedro Pablo Kuczynsky, President of the Nation, for his invitation to visit the country and for his words of welcome offered on behalf of all Peruvians.

My visit to Peru has as its theme: “United by Hope”. If I may say so, seeing this land is itself a reason for hope.

Part of your territory includes the Amazon, which I visited this morning. It is overall the largest tropical forest and the most extensive river system on the planet. This “lung”, as it has been called, is one of the world’s regions of great biodiversity, as it is home to a vast variety of species.

Yours too is a wealth and variety of cultures, which increasingly intermingle and which make up the soul of this people. It is a soul characterized by ancestral values such as hospitality, esteem for others, respect and gratitude for mother earth and creativity for new initiatives. It is marked likewise by a shared sense of responsibility for the

development of all, joined to a solidarity that has often shown itself in your response to different disasters you have experienced.

In this regard, I would like to point to the young. They are the most vital gift that this society possesses. With their dynamism and enthusiasm, they promise, and encourage us to dream of, a hope-filled future, born of the encounter between your lofty ancestral wisdom and the new eyes that youth offers.

I also take pleasure in a historical fact: that hope in this land has the face of holiness. Peru has given birth to saints that blazed paths of faith for the entire American continent. To name just one, Martin de Porres, a son of two cultures, showed the strength and richness that comes about when people focus on love. I could continue at length with this list of reasons, material and spiritual, for hope. Peru is a land of hope that invites and challenges its people to unity. This people has the duty to maintain unity, among other things, precisely to defend all these reasons for hope.

Yet over this hope a shadow is growing, a threat looms. “Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used” (104), as I wrote in my Encyclical *Laudato Si’*. This is evident in the way that we are stripping the earth of its natural resources, without which no forms of life are possible. The loss of jungles and forests means not only the loss of species, which could also be extremely important resources for the future, but also the loss of vital relationships that could end up altering the entire ecosystem (cf. *ibid.*, 32).

In this context, being “united in defense of hope” means promoting and developing an integral ecology as an alternative to “an outdated model of development [that] continues to produce human, societal and environmental decline” (*Urbi et Orbi Message*, Christmas 2017). This calls for listening to local persons and peoples, recognizing and respecting them as valid dialogue partners. They preserve a direct link to the land, they know its times and ways, and so they know the catastrophic effects produced, in the name of development, by many

projects. The vital fabric that constitutes the nation is thus being altered. The degradation of the environment, sad to say, cannot be separated from the moral degradation of our communities. We cannot think of these as two separate realities.

For example, black market mining has become a danger that is destroying people's lives; forests and rivers are being destroyed, with all the richness they possess. This process of degradation brings with it and encourages organizations operating outside of legal structures; these debase so many of our brothers and sisters by subjecting them to human trafficking (a new form of slavery), irregular employment and crime... and to other evils that gravely affect their dignity and, at the same time, the dignity of the nation.

Working together to defend hope demands that we remain very attentive to that other, often subtle form of environmental degradation that increasingly contaminates the whole system of life: corruption. How much evil is done to our Latin American people and the democracies of this continent by this social "virus", a phenomenon that infects everything, with the greatest harm being done to the poor and mother earth. Everything being done to combat this social scourge deserves our utmost attention and help... This is a battle that involves all of us. Being "united in defense of hope" requires a greater culture of transparency among public entities, the private sector and civil society. I do not exclude here ecclesiastical organizations. No one can be excluded from this process. Corruption is preventable and calls for commitment on the part of all.

I encourage and urge all those in positions of authority, in whatever sphere, to insist on this path in order to bring your people and your land the security born of feeling that Peru is a place of hope and opportunity for all, and not just for a few. In this way, all Peruvians can feel that this country is theirs and not someone else's, that here they can relate fraternally and equitably with their neighbours, and help others in their need. A land where they can realize their own future. And in this way to forge a Peru that makes room for people of "all bloods" (José María Arguedas, *Todas las sangres*, Buenos Aires, 1964), a land

in which the “the promise of Peruvian life” (Jorge Basadre, *La promesa de la vida peruana*, Lima, 1958) can be achieved.

I wish to renew in your presence the commitment of the Catholic Church, which has accompanied the life of this nation, in this joint effort to continue working so that Peru may continue to be a land of hope.

May Saint Rosa of Lima intercede for each of you and for this blessed nation.

Thank you once again.

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HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

Waterfront esplanade of Huanchaco (Trujillo)
Saturday, 20 January 2018

These lands have the flavour of the Gospel. Everything around us, against the backdrop of this immense sea, helps us better to understand the experience that the apostles had with Jesus and that today we too are invited to relive. I am happy to know that you have come from different parts of northern Peru to celebrate this joy of the Gospel.

Those disciples, like so many of you today, made their living from fishing. They went out in boats, just like some of you who continue to go out in your *caballitos de totora* (traditional reed boats), for the same reason that you do: to earn your daily bread. Much of our daily fatigue has to do with just this: trying to support our families and to provide them with what will help them to build a better future.

This “lake of golden fish”, as you call it, has been a source of life and blessing for many generations. It has nurtured dreams and hopes over the years.

Like the apostles, you know the power of nature, you have experienced its force. Just as the apostles faced the storm on the sea, you had to face the brunt of the “Niño costero” whose painful consequences are still present in so many families, especially those who are not yet able to rebuild their homes. This is also why I wanted to be here and to pray with you.

We also bring to this Eucharistic celebration that difficult moment that questions our faith and often causes it to waver. We want to unite ourselves to Jesus. He knows our pain and our trials; he endured the greatest of sufferings in order to accompany us in our own trials. The crucified Jesus wants to be close to us in every painful situation, to give us a hand and to help lift us up. Because he entered into our history, he

wanted to share in our journey and touch our wounds. Ours is a God who is not unfamiliar with what we feel and suffer; on the contrary, in the midst of our pain, he stretches out his hand to us.

These times of being “buffeted” call into question and challenge our strength of spirit and our deepest convictions. They make us realize how important it is to stand united, not alone, and to be filled with that unity which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

What happened to the virgins in the Gospel passage that we just listened to? Suddenly they heard a loud cry that woke them up and made them scurry. Some of them realized that they did not have sufficient oil to make their way in the darkness, while others filled their lamps and could see and follow the path that led to the bridegroom. At the appointed time, each of them showed what they had filled their life with.

The same thing happens to us. There are times when we realize what we have filled our lives with. How important it is to fill our lives with the oil that lets us light our lamps in situations of darkness and to find the paths to move forward!

I know that, in the time of darkness, when you felt the brunt of the Niño, these lands kept moving forward; these lands had the oil needed to go out to help one another like true brothers and sisters. You had the oil of solidarity and generosity that stirred you to action, and you went out to meet the Lord with countless concrete gestures of support. In the midst of darkness, you, together with so many others, were like living candles that lighted up the path with open hands, ready to help soothe the pain and share what you had, from your poverty, with others.

In the Gospel account, we see how the virgins who did not have oil went to the town to buy some. At the crucial moment of their lives, they realized that their lamps were empty and that they lacked what was essential to find the path of authentic joy. They went off by themselves, alone, and so they missed out on the party. There are things, as you well know, that cannot be improvised, much less be bought. The soul of a community is measured by how it manages to come together to face

times of difficulty and adversity, in order to keep hope alive. By doing so, they give the greatest witness to the Gospel. The Lord tells us: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*Jn* 13:35). For faith opens us to a love that is concrete, not of ideas, but concrete, practical, generous and compassionate, a love that can build and rebuild hope when it seems that all is lost. In this way, we share in God’s own work, which the apostle John describes in showing us a God who wipes the tears of his children. God carries out this divine work with the same tender love that a mother has when she dries the tears of her children. What a beautiful question the Lord can ask each one of us at the end of the day: how many tears did you dry today?

Other “storms” can hit these coasts, with devastating effects on the lives of the children of these lands. These storms too make us question ourselves as a community and test the strength of our spirit. Among these are organized violence, like “contract killings”, and the insecurity that they breed. Or the lack of educational and employment opportunities, especially among young people, which prevents them from building a future with dignity. Or the lack of secure housing for so many families forced to live in highly unstable areas without safe access. Or the many other situations that you have to experience, which, like terrible earthquakes, destroy the mutual trust so necessary to build a network of support and hope; earthquakes that shake the soul and require all the oil we have, if we are to respond to them. How much oil do you have?

We often wonder about how to face these storms, or how to help our children pull through in these situations. I want to tell you that no better way exists than that of the Gospel: it is called Jesus Christ. Fill your lives always with the Gospel. I want to encourage you to be a community that lets itself be anointed by the Lord with the oil of the Spirit. He transforms, renews and strengthens everything. In Jesus, we have the strength of the Spirit not to treat as natural the things that hurt us, not to make them natural, not to “normalize” what dries up our spirit and, what is worse, robs us of hope. Peruvians, in this moment of their history, do not have the right to let themselves be robbed of hope!

In Jesus, we have the Spirit who keeps us united so that we can support one another and take a stand against whatever would take away all that is best in our families. In Jesus, God makes us a believing community able to sustain itself; a community that hopes and therefore struggles to reverse and transform every adversity; a community that loves, because it will not let us fold our arms. With Jesus, the soul of this town of Trujillo can continue to be called “the city of eternal spring”, because with him, everything is an opportunity for hope.

I know of the love that this land has for the Virgin, and I know how devotion to Mary sustains you, always leading you to Jesus, and giving us that one piece of advice which she always repeats: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5). Let us ask Our Lady to cover us with her mantle and always bring us to her Son. But let us do so by singing along to that lovely Andean *marinera* [folk dance]: “Our Lady of the Gate, grant me your blessing. Our Lady of the Gate, give us peace and much love”. Do you want to sing this? Shall we sing it together? Who will begin to sing? “Our Lady of the Gate...”. No one will sing? Not even the choir? Then let us recite it, if we will not sing it. Together: “Our Lady of the Gate, grant me your blessing. Our Lady of the Gate, give us peace and much love”. Once more! “Our Lady of the Gate, grant me your blessing. Our Lady of the Gate, give us peace and much love”.

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MEETING WITH THE PRIESTS, MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS AND SEMINARIANS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCES OF NORTHERN PERU

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Saints Carlos and Marcelo Seminary College (Trujillo)
Saturday, 20 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Good afternoon!

[Loud applause] Since the custom is to clap at the end, it means I'm already finished and can go! [they reply: "No!"] I am grateful for the words of greeting that Archbishop José Antonio Eguren Anselmi of Piura addressed to me in the name of all who are here.

Meeting with you, getting to know you, listening to you and sharing our love for the Lord and the mission he has given us is very important. I know you have made great efforts to be here. Thank you!

This Seminary College that welcomes us was one of the first to be founded in Latin America for the formation of future generations of evangelizers. Being together in this place makes us realize that we are in one of those "cradles" that have produced countless missionaries. Nor can I forget that Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo, the patron of the Latin American bishops, died in this land, in the midst of his missionary activity – not sat behind a desk. All this invites us to look to our roots, to what enables us through time and the unfolding of history to grow and to bear fruit. Root. Without roots there are no flowers, no fruits. A poet once said: "every fruit that a tree has comes from what is has beneath the soil", roots. Our vocations will always have that double dimension: roots in the earth and hearts in heaven. Never forget this. When one of these two is missing, something begins to go wrong and our life gradually withers (cf. *Lk 13:6-9*), like the tree that has no roots,

withers. I tell you that it is sad to see a bishop, priest, nun, wither. I am even more saddened when I see seminarians wither. This is very serious. The Church is good, the Church is mother and if you see that you cannot, please speak up before it's too late, before you realize that you have no longer have roots and that you are withering away; there is still time to be saved, because Jesus came for this, to save, and he called us to save.

I like to point out that our faith, our vocation, is one of *remembrance*, that “deuteronomic” dimension of life. One of remembrance, because it recognizes that neither life, nor faith, nor the Church began with the birth of any one of us. Remembrance looks to the past in order to discover the sap that nourished the hearts of disciples for centuries, and thus comes to recognize God's presence in the life of his people. We remember the promise he made to our forebears and that, by his continuing presence in our midst, he is the cause of the joy that makes us sing: “The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad” (*Ps 125:3*).

I would like to share with you some of the virtues, or some aspects, if you like, of this remembrance. When I say “I want to be a bishop, a priest, a religious sister, a seminarian to have remembrance” what do I mean? That is what I want to share with you now.

1. *One aspect is a joyful self-awareness. We must not be inconsistent with ourselves, no. To be aware of what is happening to us but joyful self-awareness.*

The Gospel that we have heard (cf. *Jn 1:35-42*) is usually read in a vocational key, and so we concentrate on the disciples' encounter with Jesus. Yet I would like to go back even earlier, and take a look at John the Baptist. He was with two of his disciples, and seeing Jesus pass by, he told them: “Behold the Lamb of God” (*Jn 1:36*). On hearing this, what happened? They left John and followed the other (cf. v. 37). This is somewhat surprising, since they had been with John, they knew that he was a good man, and that, as Jesus would say, of those born of woman none was greater than he (*Mt 11:11*), yet he was not the one who was to come. John was waiting for someone greater than himself. He

clearly understood that he was not the Messiah, but simply the herald of his coming. John remembered; he was mindful of the promise and of his own place in history. He was famous, all came to be baptized by him, they listened to him with respect. The people believed that he was the Messiah, but he had remembrance of his own past and did not allow himself to be deceived by the incense of vanity.

John embodies the awareness of a disciple conscious that he is not, and never will be, the Messiah, but only one called to point out the Lord's presence in the life of his people. I'm struck how God allows the ultimate consequences of this: he dies with his head cut off in a prison cell, that simple. As consecrated men and women, we are not called to supplant the Lord by our own works, our missions, or our countless activities. When I speak of consecrated persons I am speaking of all: bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, religious and seminarians. All that we are asked to do is to work with the Lord, side by side, never forgetting that we do not replace him. This does not make us "slacken" in the work of evangelization; rather, it impels us to work all the harder, ever mindful that we are disciples of the one Master. A disciple knows that he or she is there, now and always, to support the Master. That is the source of our joy, a joyful self-awareness.

It is good to know that we are not the Messiah! It frees us from thinking that we are overly important or too busy (in some places it is not uncommon to hear people say: "No, don't go to that parish because the pastor is always busy!"). John the Baptist knew that his mission was to point the way, to make beginnings, to open up spaces, to proclaim that "another" was the bearer of God's Spirit. To be a people of remembrance frees us from the temptation of thinking that we are messiahs.

We can fight this temptation in many ways, but also with laughter. It has been said of a religious who I liked very much – a Dutch Jesuit who died last year – that he has such a sense of humour that he was able to make light of everything that happened to him, able to make light of himself, and even of his own shadows. Joyful self-awareness. Learning to laugh at ourselves gives us the spiritual ability to stand before Lord

with our limitations, our mistakes and our sins, but also our successes, and the joy of knowing that he is at our side. A good spiritual test is to ask ourselves whether we can laugh at ourselves. To laugh at others is easy, true? To criticize them and laugh at them, but it is much harder to laugh at ourselves. Laughter saves us from the “self-absorbed promethean neopelagianism of those who ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others”.¹ Laugh. Laugh in community, and not at the community or at others! Let us be on guard against people so important that they have forgotten to smile in their lives. “Yes father, but you are not offering me a solution, something to...”. Let me tell you, I have two pills that help a lot: one, speak to Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, prayer, pray and ask for the grace of joy, the joy in the midst of a situation; the second pill you can take various times a day only if you need it, yet once is enough, look at yourself in the mirror: “Is that me? That’s me? Ha ha ha”. This makes you laugh. This is not narcissism, quite the contrary, the mirror here serves as a cure. The first aspect then is joy, joyful awareness of self.

2. The second aspect if the time of the call, to own the time of the call.

John the Evangelist mentions in his Gospel the time when his life changed. Yes, when the Lord makes a person grow in awareness that he or she is called... there is the memory of when it all started: “it was about the tenth hour” (*Jn* 1:39). An encounter with Jesus changes our lives, it establishes a “before” and an “after”. It is always good to remember the hour, that special day when each of us realized, truly realized that “this impulse” was not a whim or a mere attraction but rather the Lord expecting something more of us. And this is where we can remember: that day I realized. The memory of that hour in which we were touched by his gaze.

When we forget that hour, we forget our origins, our roots; and by losing these basic coordinates, we lose sight of the most precious part of our lives as consecrated persons: the Lord’s gaze: “No father, I look at the Lord in the tabernacle”. That is good but sit down a while and allow him to look at you and remember those times he looked at you and looks at you. Allow yourselves to receive his gaze. This is the most

precious possession of a consecrated person: the Lord's gaze. Perhaps you don't like the place where the Lord found you, perhaps it wasn't an ideal situation, or "it could have been better". But it was there that he found you and healed your wounds, there. Each of us knows where and when: perhaps it was a time of complicated situations, of painful situations; yes, but it was there that the God of Life met you and made you a witness to his Life, a part of his mission and, in union with him, to be his caress for many people. We do well to remember that our vocations are a loving call to love in return, and to serve. Not to take a slice of the cake for us. If the Lord fell in love with you and chose you, it was not because you were more numerous than the others, for you are the least of peoples, but out of love! (cf. *Deut* 7:7-8). This is what the people of Israel were told in Deuteronomy. Don't put on airs. You are not the most important of peoples; you are not so great. Yet that was the people that he fell in love with. So what do you want? The Lord does not have good taste, but he fell in love with them... His is a visceral love, a merciful love that impels us in the depths of our being to go out and serve others as Jesus did. Not according to the way of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Doctors of the Law, the Zealots, no, no, they looked for their own glory.

I would like to emphasize one aspect that I consider important. Many of us, when we entered the seminary, the house of formation or the novitiate, were shaped by the faith of our families and neighbours. That is where we learned to pray, from our mother, grandmother, aunt... and later it was the catechist who prepared us... and this is how we took our first steps, frequently sustained by displays of popular piety and spirituality, which in Peru have taken on the most exquisite forms and have deep roots in God's simple and faithful people. Your people have demonstrated an immense love of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and your saints and blessed, in so great a number of devotions that I dare not name them for fear of leaving some of them out. In their shrines, "many pilgrims make decisions that mark their lives. The walls [of those shrines] contain many stories that millions could tell of conversion, forgiveness, and gifts received".² For many of you, the story of your vocation could also be written on those walls. I urge you please

not to forget, much less look down on, the solid and simple faith of your people. Welcome, accompany and stimulate their encounter with the Lord. Do not become “professionals of the sacred” by forgetting your people, from whose midst the Lord took you, from among the sheep as the Lord tells his anointed [David] in the Bible. Do not lose your remembrance and respect for those who taught you how to pray.

It has happened to me to receive a similar question from meetings with male and female Masters of Novices and from Rectors and Spiritual Directors of Seminaries: “How do we teach those who enter to pray?” They give them some manuals on learning how to pray – I got one when I entered. “Do this here” or “don’t do that”, or “first you must do this”, “then take the next step”... Generally, the wisest men and women entrusted with responsibility for novices, and Spiritual Directors and Rectors in Seminaries, should say: “Carry on praying as you were taught at home”. Then, gradually, you can move them onto other ways of prayer. But, “carry on praying as your mother taught you, as your grandmother taught you”, which is also the advice that Saint Paul gives to Timothy: “the faith of your mother and grandmother, that is the one you have and must follow”. Do not overlook the prayer acquired at home because it is the strongest. Remembering the moment of our call, rejoicing in the memory of Christ’s entrance into our lives, will help us to say that beautiful prayer of Saint Francisco Solano, the great preacher and friend of the poor: “My good Jesus, my redeemer and my friend! What do I have, that you have not given me? What do I know, that you have not taught me?”

In this way, a religious, a priest, a consecrated woman or man, a seminarian is a person of remembrance, joy and gratitude: three things we need to appropriate and keep as “weapons” against all vocational pretense. Grateful awareness enlarges the heart and inspires us to service. Without gratitude, we can be efficient dispensers of sacred things, but we will lack the anointing of the Spirit to become servants of our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. The faithful People of God have a sense of smell that enables them to distinguish a functionary of the sacred from a grateful servant. They are able to distinguish someone who is mindful from someone who is not. The

People of God are patient, but they also know who serves and heals their wounds with the balm of joy and gratitude. In this allow yourselves to be guided by the People of God. In parishes it sometimes happens that when the priest gets distracted a little and forgets his people – I am speaking about real things here, true enough? – how often does the old lady in the sacristy, who we call “la vieja de la sacristía” (“the elderly sacristan lady”) say to the priest: “Father, how long is it since you last you’re your mother? Go and see her; we can manage for a week with the Rosary”.

3. The third aspect, Contagious joy. Joy is contagious when it is real.

Andrew was one of the disciples of John the Baptist who followed Jesus that day. After spending time with Jesus and seeing where he lived, he returned to the house of his brother Simon Peter and told him: “We have found the Messiah” (*Jn 1:41*). That’s where it was passed on contagiously. That was the greatest news he could give him, and it brought him to Jesus. Faith in Jesus is contagious. And if there is a priest, a bishop, a nun, a seminarian, consecrated man or woman who is not been contaminated by joy is sterile, a laboratory worker. Let that person dirty their hands a little and begin to be contaminated by the love of Jesus. Faith in Jesus is contagious, it cannot be restrained or kept within. Here we see how witness becomes fruitful: the newly called disciples go on to attract others by their testimony of faith, just as Jesus, in the Gospel passage, calls us through others. The mission springs spontaneously from the encounter with Christ. Andrew begins his apostolate with those closest to him, with his brother Simon, almost naturally, by radiating joy. Joy is the surest sign that we have “discovered” the Messiah. Contagious joy is a constant in the hearts of the apostles, and we see it in the enthusiasm with which Andrew tells his brother: “We have found him!” For “the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and the lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew”.³ And this is contagious.

This joy opens us up to others; it is a joy not to be kept but shared. In

the fragmented world in which we live, a world that can make us withdrawn, we are challenged to become builders and prophets of community. You know that no one is saved alone. I would like to be clear about this. Fragmentation or isolation are not things that just happen “out there”, as if only a problem with the “world”. Brothers and sisters, divisions, wars and isolation are found within our communities, within are Presbyteries, within our Episcopal Conferences, and what harm they bring us! Jesus sends us out to build communion and unity, yet often it seems we go about this by displaying our disunity and, worse yet, trying to trip each other up. Am I wrong? [They reply: “No!”] Let us hang our heads in shame and take responsibility for our own share of the blame. We are called to be builders of communion and unity, but this does not mean thinking everyone is the same, or doing things always the same way. It means discerning what everyone has to offer, respecting their differences, and acknowledging the gift of charisms within the Church, knowing that while each of us contributes what he or she has, we also need one another. Only the Lord has the fullness of the gifts; only he is the Messiah. He wanted to distribute his gifts in such a way that we can give what is ours while being enriched by that of others. We must be on guard against the temptation of the “only child”, who wants everything for himself because there is no one to share it with. That is a spoilt child. I ask those of you who are in positions of authority: please not to become self-referential. Try to care for your brothers and sisters; try to keep them happy, because happiness is contagious. Do not fall into the trap of an authority that turns into authoritarianism by forgetting that its mission is primarily one of service. Those who have the mission of authority must think about this a lot. In the army there are enough sergeants; we don't need them in our communities.

Before ending: please be men and women of remembrance and go back to the roots. I think it is important that in our communities, presbyteries, the flame of memory be kept alive, encouraging dialogue between the youngest and the oldest. The oldest are full of remembrance and pass these memories onto us. We must go out to receive this, let us not abandon them. They [the elderly], over there,

they that don't speak much, they that feel a somewhat abandoned... Let us invite them to speak, especially the young must do this. Those who are in charge of forming the young; send them out to speak to the elderly priests, the elderly nuns, the elderly bishops – they say that nuns don't get old because they are eternal – send the young out to enter into dialogue. The elderly need to regain the sparkle in their eyes and to see that in the Church, among the clergy, in the Episcopal Conference, in the Convent, there are young men and women who are moving the Body of Christ forwards. Let them listen to the young and let the young ask the elderly questions. That's when the sparkle is regained in their own eyes. That's when they will begin to dream. Make the elderly dream. Joel's prophecy, 3:1. Make the elderly dream. If the young do this, I assure you that the elderly will then make the young prophesy.

Go back to the roots. I want – and I am ending – to quote a Holy Father, but I cannot think of one. But I will quote an Apostolic Nuncio. He told me, speaking about this matter, an old African saying that he learnt when he was there – because Apostolic Nuncios first go to Africa where they learn a lot – and the saying is: “The young walk quickly, and they have to do so, but it is the elderly that know the way”. Understood?

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you once more. May this “deuteronomic” remembrance make us more joyful and grateful to be servants of unity in the midst of our people. Allow the Lord to gaze upon you, search for the Lord, there, in your memories. Look at the mirror now and again.

May the Lord bless you and may Our Lady protect you. And now and again, as they say in the countryside, throw me a prayer. Thank you.

Notes

¹ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 94.

² Cf. Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, *Aparecida Document*, 29 June 2007, 260.

³ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1.

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MARIAN CELEBRATION OUR LADY OF THE GATE

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Plaza de Armas (Trujillo)
Saturday, 20 January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I thank Monsignor Héctor Miguel for his words of welcome in the name of the whole pilgrim people of God in these lands.

In this beautiful and historical square of Trujillo, that awakened dreams of freedom for all Peruvians, we are gathered to meet our “Dear Mother of Otuzco”. I know that many of you have travelled a great distance to be present today, gathered beneath our Mother’s gaze. This square has thus become an open-air shrine where all of us want to let our Mother look upon us with her maternal and tender gaze. She is a mother who knows the heart of her Peruvian children from the north and from so many other places; she has seen your tears, your laughter, your desires. In this square we want to cherish the memory of a people that knows that Mary is a Mother who does not abandon her children.

This “home” is decorated in a particularly festive way. We are surrounded by images from throughout this region. Together with the beloved Immaculate Virgin of the Gate of Otuzco, I greet and welcome the Most Holy Cross of Chalpón from Chiclayo, the Captive Lord from Ayabaca, Our Lady of Mercies from Paita, the Child Jesus of the Miracle from Eten, the Mother of Sorrows from Cajamarca, Our Lady of the Assumption from Cutervo, the Immaculate Conception of Chota, Our Lady of Alta Gracia from Huamachuco, Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo from Tayabamba (Huamachuco), Our Lady of the Assumption from Chachapoyas, Our Lady of the Assumption of Usquil, Our Lady of Succour from Huanchoco, and the relics of the Conventual Martyrs of Chimbote.

Every community, each tiny corner of this land, is accompanied by the face of a saint, and by love for Jesus Christ and for his Mother. If we consider that wherever there is a community, wherever there is life and hearts longing to find reasons to hope, to sing and to dance, to long for a decent life... there is the Lord, there we find his Mother, and there too the example of all those saints who help us to remain joyful in hope.

With you, I give thanks for the attentiveness of our God. He looks for the best way to draw near to each person, so that he or she can receive him. That is the origin of his many and varied invocations and titles. Those titles express the desire of our God to be close to each heart, so that the language of God's love is always spoken in dialect; there is no other way of doing it, and what is more, it inspires hope to see how the Mother takes on the features of her children, their way of dressing and their dialect, in order to make them share in her blessing. Mary will always be a *mestiza* Mother, because in her heart all races find a place, for love seeks out every possible way to love and to be loved. All these images remind us of the tender love with which God wants to be close to every village and every family, to you and you, to me, to everyone.

I know of the love that you have for the Immaculate Virgin of the Gate of Otuzco. Today, together with you, I wish to declare her: Our Lady of the Gate, "Mother of Mercy and Hope".

Our Lady, who in centuries past showed her love for the children of this land when, placed above a gateway, she defended and protected them from the threats that afflicted them, awakening the love of all Peruvians even to our own day.

Mary continues to defend us and point out the gate that opens for us the way to authentic life, to the Life that does not pass away. She walks beside every one of her children, in order to lead them home. She accompanies us all the way to the Gate that gives Life, for Jesus does not want anyone to remain outside, in the cold. In this way, she accompanies "the yearning of so many people to turn back to the house of the Father, who awaits their return"¹, yet so often do not know how to do so. Saint Bernard said: "You who feel far away from terra firma, dragged down by the waves of this world, in the midst of storms and

tempests: look to the Star and call upon Mary”.² She shows us the way home. She brings us to Jesus, who is the Gate of Mercy, and she entrusts us to him, asking nothing for herself, she brings us to Jesus.

In 2015, we had the joy of celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy. In the course of that year, I invited all the faithful to pass through the Door of Mercy, “through which”, I wrote, “anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instils hope”.³ I would like to repeat with you now that same hope: “How much I desire that the years to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!”⁴ How much I desire that this land, which clings to the Mother of Mercy and Hope, can abound in God’s goodness and tender love and bring it everywhere. For there is no better medicine, dear brothers and sisters, to cure many wounds than a heart that has known mercy, than a heart that is compassionate before sorrow and misfortune. A heart compassionate before people’s mistakes and their desire to change, without knowing where to start.

Compassion is active, for “we have learned that God bends down to us (cf. *Hos* 11:4), so that we may imitate him in bending down to our brothers and sisters”,⁵ above all to those who suffer the most. And like Mary, in being attentive to those who lack the wine of gladness, as happened at the wedding feast of Cana.

Looking to Mary, I do not want to conclude without asking all of us to think of the mothers and grandmothers of this nation; they are a true driving force for the life and the families of Peru. What would Peru be like, without its mothers and grandmothers! What would our lives be like without them! Our love for Mary must help us to feel appreciation and gratitude for women, for our mothers and grandmothers, who are a bastion in the life in our cities. Almost always in silence, they carry life forward. It is the silence and strength of hope. Thank you for your witness.

Appreciation and gratitude. But in thinking of our mothers and grandmothers, I want to invite you to combat a scourge that affects our American continent: the numerous cases where women are killed. And

the many situations of violence that are kept quiet behind so many walls. I ask you to fight against this source of suffering by calling for legislation and a culture that repudiates every form of violence.

Brothers and sisters, Our Lady of the Gate, Mother of Mercy and Hope, shows us the way and points out the best defence against the evil of indifference and insensitivity. She brings us to her Son and encourages us to promote and spread a “*culture of mercy* based on the rediscovery of encounter with others, a culture in which no one looks at another with indifference or turns away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters”.⁶ May the Virgin grant you this grace.

Notes

¹ Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera* at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (20 November 2016), 16.

² *Homily II super «Missus est»*, 17: PL 183, 70.

³ Bull of Indiction *Misericordiae Vultus* (11 April 2015), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera* at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (20 November 2016), 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

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MID-DAY PRAYER WITH CONTEMPLATIVE WOMEN RELIGIOUS

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

Shrine of the Lord of the Miracles (Lima)
Sunday, 21 January 2018

Dear Sisters from different monasteries of contemplative life:

How good it is to be here in this Shrine of the Lord of Miracles, visited so often by Peruvians, to ask his grace so that he will show us his closeness and mercy! He is “the light that guides, that illumines us with his divine love”. Seeing you here, I have a bad thought: that you took advantage of this visit to get out for some fresh air! [Applause] Mother Soledad, I thank you for your words of welcome, and I thank all of you, who “from the silence of the cloister walk ever by my side”. Also – this you will allow me to say as it touches my heart – from this place I send a greeting to my four Carmels in Buenos Aires. I want to also put them before the Lord of Miracles, because they accompanied me in my ministry in that Diocese, and I want them to be here to receive the Lord’s blessing. You are not jealous? [They reply: “No”]

We have listened to the words of Saint Paul and been reminded that we have received the Spirit of filial adoption that makes us children of God (cf. *Rom 8:15-16*). Those few words sum up the richness of every Christian vocation: the joy of knowing we are God’s children. This is the experience that nourishes our lives, that seeks always to be a pleasing response to God’s love. How important it is to renew this joy day by day! Above all, during those moments when joy seems to have gone or the soul is burdened under a cloud or there are things we don’t understand; from there ask the Lord again to renew the gift: “I am a daughter, a daughter of God”.

A privileged path that you have for renewing this conviction is the life of prayer, both communal and individual. Prayer is the heart of your

consecrated life, your contemplative life, and the means of cultivating the experience of love that sustains our faith and, indeed as Mother Soledad rightly said, it is always a missionary prayer. It is not a prayer that bounces off the walls of the convent and comes back. No, it is a prayer that goes forth and up and up...

Missionary prayer makes us one with our brothers and sisters in whatever situations they find themselves, and asks that love and hope will never fail them. This is what Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus said: “I understood that it is love alone which prompts the members of the Church to act and, if there is no love, neither would the Apostles proclaim the Gospel, nor would the martyrs spill their blood. I recognized clearly and I was certain that love subsumes in itself all vocations, that love is everything, encompassing all times and places, in a word, that love is eternal... in the heart of the Church, who is my Mother, I will be love”.¹ Oh that each of you could say this. If any of you are weary and the small flame of love seems to have been extinguished, ask him, ask him! To love is a gift of God.

To be love! This means being able to stand alongside the suffering of so many of our brothers and sisters, and to say with the Psalmist: “In my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free” (*Ps* 117:5). In this way, your cloistered life can attain a missionary and universal outreach and play “a fundamental role in the life of the Church. You pray and intercede for our many brothers and sisters who are prisoners, migrants, refugees and victims of persecution. Your prayers of intercession embrace the many families experiencing difficulties, the unemployed, the poor, the sick, and those struggling with addiction, to mention just a few of the more urgent situations. You are like those who brought the paralytic to the Lord for healing (cf. *Mk* 2: 1-12)”. They were not ashamed, they were “without shame”, and well said. They were not ashamed to make a hole in the roof to lower down the paralytic. Be “not ashamed” to bring before the power of God, through your prayers, the miseries of mankind. That is your prayer. “Through your prayer, night and day, you bring before God the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters who for various reasons cannot come to him to experience his healing mercy, even as he patiently waits

for them. By your prayers, you can heal the wounds of many”.²

For this very reason, we can state that cloistered life neither closes nor shrinks our hearts, but rather widens them. Woe to the nun that has a closed heart. Please find the remedy – you cannot be a contemplative nun with a closed heart – so that you can breathe again, that you may once more have a great heart. Moreover, nuns with closed hearts are nuns who have lost fruitfulness and are not mothers. They complain about everything, I’d say they are bitter, always looking for “scrupulous details” to moan about. The holy Mother used to say: “Woe to the nun who says ‘they harmed me without reason’, ‘they have acted unjustly against me’”. In the convent there is no room for collectors of injustices rather there is room for those who open their hearts and know how to carry the cross that bears fruit, the cross of love, the cross which brings life. Love expands the heart and thus we can move forwards with the Lord because he makes it possible to feel in a new way the pain, the suffering, the frustration and the misfortune of so many of our brothers and sisters who are victims of today’s “throwaway culture”. May intercession for those in need be the hallmark of your prayer. With your arms outstretched, like Moses, with the heart open in this way, imploring. And whenever possible, help them not only by prayer, but also by concrete service. How many of your convents, without infringing the cloistered element, and respectful of silence, are able to do so much good during those moments in the visiting room.

The prayer of supplication that takes place in your monasteries is attuned to the Heart of Jesus, which pleads to the Father that we may all be one, so that the world will believe (cf. *Jn* 17:21). How much we need unity in the Church! May all be one. How much we need the baptized to be one, consecrated persons to be one, priests to be one, bishops to be one! Today and always! United in faith. United by hope. United by love. In the unity that wells up from our communion with Christ, who unites us to the Father in the Spirit, and, in the Eucharist, unites us with one another in that great mystery which is the Church. I ask you, please, to pray constantly for unity in this beloved Church in Peru because it is experiencing the temptation against unity. I entrust this unity to you, the unity of the Church, the unity of pastoral workers,

of consecrated men and women, of the clergy and of bishops. The devil is a liar and, what is more, he is a gossip, he loves going from one place to the other, seeking to divide, and he wants members of a community to speak badly of each other. I have said this many times, and will repeat it here: Do you know what a gossiping nun is like? She is a terrorist, worse than those of Ayacucho years ago, worse, because gossip is like a bomb. The terrorist just like the devil goes in whispering and murmuring, throws the bomb, destroys and calmly walks off. No to terrorist nuns, no to gossip. You know the best remedy against gossip? Bite your tongue. The infirmary sister will have a lot of work because there will be swollen tongues but at least bombs will not be thrown. In other words, there must not be gossiping in the convent, because this is instigated by the devil, for he is a gossip by nature and a liar. And remember the terrorists of Ayacucho when you feel like passing on a piece of gossip.

Strive to grow in the fraternal life, so that every monastery can be a beacon of light in the midst of disunity and division. Help bear prophetic witness that this is possible. May all who draw near to you have a foretaste of the blessedness of the fraternal charity so essential to the consecrated life and so necessary in today's world and in our communities.

When we live our vocation faithfully, our life becomes a proclamation of God's love. I ask you never to stop giving that witness. In this Church of the Discalced Carmelite Nazarenes, I readily recall the words of the great spiritual teacher, Saint Teresa of Jesus: "If you lose your guide, who is the good Jesus, you will not get the journey right...". Always behind him: and yet you might say to me, 'but father sometimes Jesus ends up on Calvary'. Well, I answer, you go there too, for he waits for you there also because he loves you, "for the same Lord says he is the way; the Lord also says he is the light, and that no one can come to the Father except through him".³

Dear sisters, know one thing, the Church does not tolerate you, she needs you. The Church needs you, with your lives of fidelity be beacons, and keep pointing to the One who is the way, and the truth and the life,

to the one Lord who brings us fulfilment and grants us life in abundance.⁴

Pray for the Church, pray for priests and bishops, for consecrated men and women, for families, for those who suffer, for those who harm others and destroy the lives of many people, for those who exploit their brothers and sisters. And please, following the list of sinners, do not forget to pray for me.

Notes

¹ *Autobiographical manuscripts: Letter to Sister Marie of the Sacred Heart* (8 September 1896), Ms. B [3v.].

² Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere* on women's contemplative life (29 June 2016), 16.

³ *The Interior Castle*, VI, ch. 7, no. 6.

⁴ Cf. Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere* on women's contemplative life (29 June 2016), 6.

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PRAYER BEFORE THE RELICS OF THE PERUVIAN SAINTS

Cathedral of Saint John the Apostle, Lima
Sunday, 21 January 2018

God our Father,
through Jesus Christ
you founded your Church
on the rock of the Apostles,
that, guided by the Holy Spirit,
she may be a sign and instrument
of your love and mercy in the world:
we thank you for the gifts you have
bestowed upon our Church in Lima.

We thank you in a special way
for the holiness that has flourished in our land.
Our Archdiocesan Church has been made fruitful
by the apostolic labours of Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo,
enlarged by the prayer, penance and charity
of Saint Rose of Lima and Saint Martin de Porres,
adorned by the missionary zeal of Saint Francisco Solano
and the humble service of Saint Juan Macías.
It has been blessed by the witness of Christian life and fidelity to the
Gospel
of many others of our brothers and sisters.
We give you thanks for all that you have accomplished in our history
and we ask you to keep us faithful to the heritage we have received.

Help us to be a Church that goes forth,
drawing near to all, especially the less fortunate.
Teach us to be missionary disciples
of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Miracles,
living in love, seeking unity

and practising mercy,
so that, protected by the intercession
of Our Lady of Evangelization,
we may live the joy of the Gospel
and proclaim it before the world.

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MEETING WITH THE PERUVIAN BISHOPS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Archbishop's House (Lima)
Sunday, 21 January 2018

Dear Brother Bishops,

Thank you for the kind words addressed to me by the Cardinal Archbishop of Lima and the President of the Episcopal Conference in the name of all present. I have looked forward to being here with you. I recall with pleasure your visit *ad limina* last year. At the time, I think had much to discuss, so what I am now going to say will be more brief.

These days I have spent among you have been very intense and gratifying. I have been able to learn about and experience some of the different realities that shape these lands, and to share at first hand the faith of God's holy and faithful people, which does us so much good. Thank you for the opportunity to "touch" the faith of the people that God has entrusted to you. Here, in fact, it is impossible not to touch it. If you do not touch the faith of the people, the faith of the people does not touch you. But to be there, and to see the streets crowded with people, is a grace for which we should fall to our knees and give thanks.

The theme of this Visit speaks to us of *unity* and *hope*. This is a demanding yet exciting programme, which makes us think us of the heroic accomplishments of Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo, archbishop of this see and patron of the Latin American episcopate, an example of a "builder of ecclesial unity", as my predecessor, Saint John Paul II described him during his first Apostolic Visit to this land.¹

It is significant that this holy bishop is frequently portrayed as a "new Moses". As you know, the Vatican has a picture in which Saint Turibius appears crossing a great river whose waters open before him like the Red Sea, so that he could get to the other shore, where a numerous group of natives awaited him. Behind Saint Turibius is a great crowd,

representing the faithful people who follow their shepherd in the task of evangelization.² This beautiful image in the Vatican Museums can serve to anchor my reflection with you. *Saint Turibius, the man who wanted to get to the other shore.*

We see him from the time in which he accepted the mandate to come to these lands with the mission to be a father and a shepherd. He left the security of familiar surroundings in order to enter a completely new universe, unknown and filled with challenges. He journeyed towards a promised land guided by faith as “the assurance of things hoped for” (*Heb 11:1*). His faith and his trust in the Lord impelled him, then and for the rest of his life, to get to the other shore, where the Lord himself was waiting for him in the midst of a great crowd.

1. He wanted to get to the other shore in search of the distant and dispersed. To do so, he had to leave behind the comfort of the bishop’s residence and traverse the territory entrusted to him in constant pastoral visits; he tried to visit and stay wherever he was needed, and how greatly was he needed! He went out to encounter everyone, along paths that, in the words of his secretary, were meant more for goats than for people. Turibius had to face greatly differing climates and landscapes, “of the twenty-two years – and some – of his episcopate, eighteen were spent outside of Lima, outside of his city, crossing his territory three times”.³ That territory extended from Panama to the beginning of the Captaincy of Chile. I don’t know where it began back then – perhaps on the highlands of Iquique, but I’m not sure. All the way to the Captaincy of Chile. Like one of your own dioceses, no more! In eighteen years, he crossed his territory three times. He knew that this was the one way to be a pastor: to be close to his own, dispensing the sacraments, and he constantly exhorted his priests to do the same. He did so not only by words, but by his witness in the front lines of evangelization. Today we would call him a “street” bishop. A bishop with shoes worn out by walking, by constant travel, by setting out to “preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance and fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded”.⁴ How much Saint Turibius knew this! Without fear and without hesitation he immersed himself in our continent in

order to proclaim the good news.

2. He wanted to get to the other shore not only geographically but also culturally. Consequently, he worked in many ways for an evangelization in the native languages. With the Third Council of Lima he provided for catechisms to be compiled and translated into Quechua and Aymara. He encouraged the clergy to learn the language of their flock in order to administer the sacraments to them in a way they could understand. I think of the liturgical reform that Pius XII began to introduce for the whole Church... Visiting and living with his people, he realized that it was not enough just to be there physically, but to learn to speak the language of others, for only in this way could the Gospel be understood and touch the heart. How necessary is this vision for us, the pastors of the twenty-first century! For we have to learn completely new languages, like that, for example, of this, our digital age. To know the real language of our young people, our families, our children... As Saint Turibius clearly realized, it is not enough just to be present and occupy space; we have to be able to generate processes in people's lives, so that the faith can take root and be meaningful. And to do that, we have to be able to speak their language. We need to get to the places where new stories and paradigms are being born, to bring the word of Jesus to the very heart of our cities and our peoples.⁵ The evangelization of culture requires us to enter into the heart of culture itself, so that it can be illuminated from within by the Gospel. I was moved, the day before yesterday, in Puerto Maldonado, when, amid all those native peoples from different ethnic groups, three men brought me a stole, all painted and wearing their native dress. They were permanent deacons. Take heart, as Turibius did. At that time there were no permanent deacons, there were catechists in the people's own language and culture, and off he went. I was moved to see those permanent deacons.

3. Saint Turibius wanted to get to the other shore of charity. For our patron, there could be no evangelization without charity. He knew that the supreme form of evangelization is to model in our own lives the self-giving of Jesus Christ, out of love for every man and woman. The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not practise justice are not from God, nor are those who do not

love their brothers and sisters (cf. *1 Jn* 3:10). In his visits, he was able to see the abuses and excesses that the original peoples had suffered, and thus he was unafraid, in 1585, to excommunicate the *Corregidor* of Cajatambo, setting himself against a whole system of corruption and a web of interests which “drew upon him the enmity of many”, including the Viceroy.⁶ Such, we see, is the pastor who knows that spiritual good can never be separated from just material good, and all the more so when the integrity and dignity of persons is at risk. An episcopal spirit of prophecy unafraid of denouncing abuses and excesses committed against our people. In this way, Turibius reminds society as a whole, and each community, that charity must always be accompanied by justice. And that there can be no authentic evangelization that does not point out and denounce every sin against the lives of our brothers and sisters, especially against the lives of those who are most vulnerable. This is a warning against any attempt to flirt with the world; it only ties our hands, only to receive a few crumbs in return; the freedom of the Gospel...

4. He wanted to get to the other shore in the formation of his priests. He founded the first post-Tridentine seminary in this part of the world, thus encouraging the training of the native clergy. He realized that it was not enough to visit everywhere and to speak the same language: the Church needed to raise up her own local pastors and thus become a fruitful mother. To this end, he defended the ordination of the *mestizos* – a controversial issue at that time – and sought to make others see that if the clergy needed to be different in any area, it had to be by virtue of their holiness and not their racial origin.⁷ This formation was not limited to seminary studies, but continued through the constant visits that he undertook. He was close to his priests. With his visits, he was able to see firsthand the “state of his priests” and to show his concern for them. The story goes that on Christmas Eve his sister gave him a shirt that he could wear for the holidays. That same day he went to visit a priest and, seeing his living conditions, took off the shirt and gave it to him.⁸ He was a pastor who knew his priests. A pastor who tried to visit them, to accompany them, to encourage them and to admonish them. He reminded his priests that they were pastors and not shopkeepers,

and so they had to care for and defend the *indios* as their children.⁹ Yet he did not do this from a desk, and so he knew his sheep and they recognized, in his voice, the voice of the good shepherd.

5. He wanted to get to the other shore of unity. In an admirable and prophetic way, he worked to open up possibilities for communion and participation among the different members of God's people. Saint John Paul II mentioned this when speaking to the bishops in these lands. He noted that: "The Third Council of Lima was the result of that effort, guided, encouraged and directed by Saint Turibius; it bore fruit in a wealth of unity in faith, pastoral and organizational norms, and useful insights for the desired integration of Latin America".¹⁰ We know very well that this unity and consensus emerged from great tensions and conflicts. We cannot deny tensions and the differences: they exist, and life is not possible without conflict. Yet they require us, if we are men and Christians, to face them and to deal with them. But to deal with them in a spirit of unity, in honest and sincere dialogue, face to face, taking care not to fall into temptation to ignore the past, or to remain prisoners, lacking the vision to discern paths of unity and peace. It is a source of encouragement, in our journey as an episcopal conference, to know that unity will always prevail over conflict.¹¹ Dear brother bishops, work for unity. Do not remain prisoners of divisions that create cliques and hamper our vocation to be a sacrament of communion. Remember: what was attractive about the early church was to see how they loved one another. That was – and is and always will be – the best way to evangelize.

6. The moment came for Saint Turibius to get to the final shore, to the land of which he had a foretaste on every shore he left. This time, however, he did not leave alone. As in the picture I spoke of previously, he went to meet the saints surrounded by a great crowd. He was a pastor who packed "his bags" with names and faces. They were his passport to heaven. I would not like to pass over this final chord, the moment when the shepherd surrendered his soul to God. He did so in a hut, the midst of his people, while a native played a song on his *chirimía* so that the soul of his pastor would feel at peace. Brothers, would that when we undertake our final journey, we might have this

same experience. Let us ask the Lord to grant this to us.¹²

Let us pray for one another, and pray for me. Thank you.

Notes

- ¹ *Address to the Peruvian Bishops* (2 February 1985), 3.
- ² Cf. *Miracle of Saint Turibius*, Vatican Pinacoteca.
- ³ JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO, *Homily at Mass, Aparecida* (16 May 2007).
- ⁴ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 23.
- ⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 74.
- ⁶ Cf. ERNESTO ROJAS INGUNZA, *El Perú de los Santos*, in: KATHY PERALES YSLA (ed.), *Cinco Santos del Perú. Vida, obra y tiempo*, Lima (2016), 57.
- ⁷ Cf. JOSÉ ANTONIO BENITO RODRÍGUEZ, *Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo*, in KATHY PERALES YSLA (ed.), *Cinco Santos del Perú. Vida, obra y tiempo*, Lima (2016), 178.
- ⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 180.
- ⁹ Cf. JUAN VILLEGAS, *Fiel y evangelizador. Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo, patrono de los obispos de América Latina*, Montevideo (1984), 22.
- ¹⁰ *Address to the Peruvian Bishops* (2 February 1985), 3.
- ¹¹ Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 226-230.
- ¹² Cf. JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO, *Homily at Mass, Aparecida* (16 May 2007).

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ANGELUS

“Plaza de Armas” Square (Lima)
Sunday, 21 January 2018

Greeting to Young People before the Angelus

Dear young people, I am pleased to be here with you. These meetings are very important for me, especially in this year of preparation for the Synod on young people. Your faces, your questions and your lives are important for the Church and we need to give them the importance they deserve. We must also have the courage of the many young people of this land who were not afraid to love and risk their lives for Jesus.

Dear friends, how many examples you have! I think of Saint Martin de Porres. Nothing prevented that young man from achieving his dreams, nothing prevented him from spending his life for others, nothing prevented him from loving, and he did so because he had realized that the Lord loved him first. Just as he was: a *mulato*. He had to face many hardships. In the eyes of others, even his friends, it seemed that he had everything to lose, but he knew how to do one thing that would be the secret of his life: he knew how to trust. To trust in the Lord who loved him. Do you know why? Because the Lord had trusted him first; just as he trusts each of you and will never tire of trusting you. To each of us the Lord has entrusted something and the response is to trust in him. Each of you reflect in your heart: “What has the Lord entrusted me with?” Let everyone reflect: “What is it in my heart that the Lord has entrusted me with?”

You may say that sometimes this is very difficult. I understand that. In those moments, we can think negative thoughts, we can feel overwhelmed by different situations, and it can seem that we are “thrown out of the world-cup”, while they have the upper hand. But it’s not like that, even in the moments in which we’re thrown out, carry on trusting.

There are moments when you can feel powerless to achieve your desires and dreams. We all experience situations like that. In these moments when our faith seems to fade, remember that Jesus is by your side. Do not give up! Do not lose hope! Remember the saints who accompany us from heaven. Go to them, pray and never tire of asking for their intercession. Not only the saints of the past, but also those of the present: this land has many of them, because it is a land of saints. Peru is a land of saints. Ask for help and advice from people you know can give good advice because their faces radiate joy and peace. Let them accompany you as you journey along the path of life.

But there is something else, Jesus wants to see you on the move. He wants to see you achieve your ideals and to be enthusiastic in following his instructions. He will take you along the path of the beatitudes, a path that is not easy but exciting, a path that cannot be travelled alone, it has to be travelled as a team, where each member offers the best of his or her self. Jesus is counting on you as he counted long ago on Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Turibius, Saint Juan Macías, Saint Francisco Solano and so many others. And today he asks if, like them, you are ready to follow him [They reply: “Yes”]. Today, tomorrow, will you be willing to follow him? [They reply: “Yes”]. And within a week? [“Yes”]. Don’t be overly confident. If you are inclined to follow him, ask him to prepare your heart in order to be willing to follow him. Clear?

Dear friends, the Lord looks on you with hope. He never grows discouraged with us. We sometimes become discouraged with a friend because we thought he or she was good but then we saw something which was not so good and we became discouraged and abandoned that person. Jesus is never discouraged, never: “Father, but if you knew the things I do, I say something but I do another, my life is not completely clean”. This being so, Jesus does not become discouraged about you. And now let us have a little silence. Each of you look into your heart to see how your life is, you will see that there are moments with good things and there are moments with things that are not so good. This being so, Jesus is not discouraged about you. And from your heart tell him: “Thank you Jesus, thank you because you came to accompany me when I was still in bad things, thank you Jesus”. Let us all tell him:

“Thank you Jesus” [They all repeat this].

I know that we all like to see digitally enhanced photographs, but that only works for pictures; we cannot “photoshop” others, the world, or ourselves. Colour filtering and high definition only function well in video; we can never apply them to our friends. There are pictures that are very nice, but completely fake. Let me assure you that the heart can’t be “photoshopped”, because that’s where authentic love and genuine happiness have to be found and that’s where you show him who you are: how is your heart?

Jesus does not want you to have a “cosmetic” heart. He loves you as you are, and he has a dream for every one of you. Do not forget, he does not get discouraged with us. But if you get discouraged, I invite you to take a look at the Bible and remember the kind of friends Jesus chose.

Moses, he was not articulate; Abraham, an old man; Jeremiah, very young; Zacchaeus, a short man; the disciples, who fell asleep when Jesus told them they should pray; Mary Magdalene, a public sinner, Paul, a persecutor of Christians; Peter, who denied him, and was then made Pope, yet he denied Jesus... and we could go on with the list. Jesus wants us as we are, just as he wanted his friends, with their defects, desiring to correct them yes, but as they were, that’s how the Lord loves you. Don’t put on any make-up, don’t put any make-up on the heart, but show yourself to Jesus as you are so that he can help you to move forwards in life.

When Jesus looks at us, he does not think about how perfect we are, but about all the love we have in our hearts to give him and to follow him. That is the important thing for him, that is the greatest thing, “how much love do I have in my heart?” And the response I want it to be also directed to our Mother: “Mother, beloved Blessed Virgin, look at the love I have in my heart, is it little? Is it much? I do not know if it is love”.

Be assured that she will accompany you at every moment of your life, at all the crossroads of your journey, especially at those times when you have to make important decisions. Do not become discouraged, move

forwards, all together, because life is worth living with our heads held high. May God bless you.

[Appeal]

We are in the Plaza Mayor of Lima, a small place in a relatively small city of the world, but the world is much bigger and full of cities and peoples, and is also full of problems, full of wars. Today I have heard very concerning news coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo; let us think of that country. In these moments, from this Plaza and with all those young people, I ask the authorities, those responsible and everyone within that beloved nation, to make the greatest commitment and effort to avoid every form of violence and to find solutions that favour the common good. Altogether, in silence, let us pray for this intention for our brothers and sisters of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

[Angelus Prayer and Apostolic Blessing]

Good bye!

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HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

“Las Palmas” Air Base (Lima)
Sunday, 21 January 2018

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you” (*Jon* 3:2). With these words the Lord spoke to Jonah and directed him to set out towards that great city, which was about to be destroyed for its many evils. In the Gospel, we also see Jesus setting out towards Galilee to preach the Good News (cf. *Mk* 1:14). Both readings reveal a God who turns His gaze towards cities past and present. The Lord sets out on a journey: to Nineveh, to Galilee, to Lima, to Trujillo and Puerto Maldonado... the Lord comes here. He sets out to enter into our concrete personal history. We celebrated this not long ago: He is Emmanuel, the God Who wants *to be with us always*. Yes, here in Lima, or wherever you are living, in the routine of your daily life and work, in the education to hope that you impart to your children, amid your aspirations and anxieties; within the privacy of the home and the deafening noise of our streets. It is there, along the dusty paths of history, that the Lord comes to meet each of you.

Sometimes what happened to Jonah can happen to us. Our cities, with their daily situations of pain and injustice, can leave us tempted to flee, to hide, to run away. Jonah, and we, have plenty of excuses to do so. Looking at the city, we can start by saying that there are “citizens who find adequate means to develop their personal and family life” – and this pleases us – yet the problem is the many “non-citizens”, “the half-citizens” or “urban remnants”¹. They are found along our roadsides, living on the fringes of our cities, and lacking the conditions needed for a dignified existence. It is painful to realize that among these “urban remnants” all too often we see the faces of children and adolescents. We look at the face of the future.

Seeing these things in our cities and our neighbourhoods – which should be places of encounter, solidarity and joy – we end up with what we might call the Jonah syndrome: we lose heart and want to flee (cf. *Jon* 1:3). We become indifferent, and as a result, anonymous and deaf to others, cold and hard of heart. When this happens, we wound the soul of the people, this noble people. As Benedict XVI pointed out, “the true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer... A society unable to accept its suffering members and incapable of helping to share their suffering and to bear it inwardly through ‘com-passion’ is a cruel and inhuman society”.²

After they arrested John, Jesus set out to Galilee to proclaim the Gospel of God. Unlike Jonah, Jesus reacted to the distressing and unjust news of John’s arrest by entering the city; He entered Galilee and from its small towns He began to sow the seeds of a great hope: that the Kingdom of God is at hand, that God is among us. The Gospel itself shows us the joy and the rippling effect that this brought about: it started with Simon and Andrew, then James and John (cf. *Mk* 1:14-20). It then passed through Saint Rose de Lima, Saint Turibius, Saint Martin de Porres, Saint Juan Macías, Saint Francisco Solano, down to us, proclaimed by that cloud of witnesses that have believed in him. It came to Lima, to us, in order to act once more as a timely antidote to the globalization of indifference. In the face of that Love, one cannot remain indifferent.

Jesus invites His disciples to experience in the present a taste of eternity: the love of God and neighbour. He does this the only way He can, God’s way, by awakening tenderness and love of mercy, by awakening compassion and opening their eyes to see reality as God does. He invites them to generate new bonds, new covenants rich in eternal life.

Jesus *walks through the city*. He walks with His disciples and begins to see, to hear, to notice those who have given up in the face of indifference, laid low by the grave sin of corruption. He begins to bring to light many situations that had killed the hope of His people and to awaken a new hope. He calls His disciples and invites them to set out

with Him. He calls them to walk through to the city, but at a different pace; He teaches them to notice what they had previously overlooked, and He points out new and pressing needs. Repent, He tells them. The Kingdom of Heaven means finding in Jesus a God who gets involved with the lives of His people. He gets involved and involves others not to be afraid to make of our history a history of salvation (cf. *Mk* 1:15, 21).

Jesus continues to walk on our streets. He knocks today, as He did yesterday, on our doors and hearts, in order to rekindle the flame of hope and the aspiration that breakdown can be overcome by fraternity, injustice defeated by solidarity, violence silenced by the weapons of peace. Jesus continues to call us; He wants to anoint us with His Spirit so that we too can go out to anoint others with the oil capable of healing wounded hopes and renewing our way of seeing things.

Jesus continues to walk and *to awaken hope*, a hope that frees us from empty associations and impersonal analyses. He encourages us to enter like leaven into where we are, where we live, into every corner of our daily life. The kingdom of heaven is among you, He tells us. It is there wherever we strive to show a little tenderness and compassion, wherever we are unafraid to create spaces for the blind to see, the paralyzed to walk, lepers to be cleansed and the deaf to hear (cf. *Lk* 7:22), so that all those we had given up for lost can enjoy the resurrection. God will never tire of setting out to meet His children. Every one of them. How will we enkindle hope if prophets are lacking? How will we face the future if unity is lacking? How will Jesus reach all those corners if daring and courageous witnesses are lacking?

Today the Lord calls each of you to walk with Him in the city, He calls you to walk with Him in your city. He invites you to become His missionary disciple, so that you can become part of that great whisper that wants to keep echoing in the different corners of our lives: Rejoice, the Lord is with you!

Notes

¹ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 74.

² Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 38.

Greeting of the Holy Father

I thank Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani, archbishop of Lima, for his kind words, and the Bishops of Puerto Maldonado and Trujillo, whose ecclesiastical jurisdictions I was able to visit in these days. I also thank the President of the Episcopal Conference, my brother bishops for their presence, and all of you who have helped make this visit so memorable.

I am grateful to all who have made this journey possible; there are so many of them and many are anonymous. Above all, I thank President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, the civil authorities and the thousands of volunteers whose quiet and selfless devotion made everything run smoothly. Thank you, unheralded volunteers! I am grateful to the organizing committee and to all those whose dedication and efforts made my visit possible. In a special way I wish to thank the group of architects that designed the three altars in the three cities. May God continue to bless your work. Being with all of you has been very good for me.

I began my pilgrimage among you by speaking of Peru as a land of hope. A land of hope because of its biodiversity and the beauty of its landscapes, which help us to discover the presence of God.

A land of hope because of its rich traditions and customs, which have shaped the soul of this people.

A land of hope for its young people, who are not the future but the present of Peru. I urge them to discover in the wisdom of their grandparents and their elders, the DNA that guided their great saints. Young people, please, do not lose your roots! And you, grandparents and elders, keep passing on to the new generations the traditions of

your people and the wisdom that charts the path to heaven. I urge all of you not to be afraid to be the saints of the XXI century.

Dear Peruvian brothers and sisters, you have so many reasons for hope. I saw this and I “touched” it in these days. Please, protect your hope; let no one rob you of it. There is no better way to protect your hope than to remain united, so that these reasons for hope may grow day by day in your hearts.

Hope does not disappoint (Rom 5:5). You are in my heart. God bless you. Do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

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