



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE  
**BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ  
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N. 171202a

Saturday 02.12.2017

**Apostolic Trip of the Holy Father Francis to Myanmar and Bangladesh (26 November – 2 December 2017) – Visit to the “Mother Teresa House”, Meeting with priests, men and women religious, consecrated persons, seminarians and novice at the “Holy Rosary Church” in Chittagong, and Visit to the parish cemetery and the old part of the Church**

**Visit to the “Mother Teresa House” in Tejgaon**

**Meeting with priests, men and women religious, consecrated persons, seminarians and novice at the “Holy Rosary Church” in Chittagong**

**Visit to the parish cemetery and the old part of the Church**

**Visit to the “Mother Teresa House” in Tejgaon**

This morning, after celebrating Holy Mass privately, at 9.15 local time (4.15 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis left the apostolic nunciature in Dhaka and transferred by car to the “Mother Teresa House” in Tejgaon for a private visit.

Upon arrival, the Pope was received by the bishop responsible for social pastoral ministry, H.E. Msgr. Paul Ponen Kubi, C.S.C., bishop of Mymensingh, the superior of the “Mother Teresa House”, and the regional superior of the Missionary Sisters of Charity. He was then accompanied to two rooms where he was awaited by several children and elderly people, assisted by the Congregation’s structures, while a choir of children performed several hymns in the courtyard of the House.

At the end of his visit, the Holy Father presented a gift to the “Mother Teresa House”. He then transferred on foot to the Holy Rosary Church for the meeting with priests, men and women religious, consecrated persons, seminarians and novices.

**Meeting with priests, men and women religious, consecrated persons, seminarians and novice at the “Holy Rosary Church” in Chittagong**

At 10.45 local time (5.45 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis met with around 1,500 priests, men and women religious, consecrated persons, seminarians and novices in the Holy Rosary Church, the cathedral-Church of the archdiocese of Chittagong.

Upon arrival, the Holy Father was received at the entrance to the church by the bishop of Khulna, H.E. Msgr. Romen Boiragi, the parish priest and the president of the Association of Religious in Bangladesh.

After the welcome hymn and greetings from the archbishop of Chittagong, H.E. Msgr. Moses M. Costa, C.S.C., a priest, a missionary, a nun, a religious and a seminarian gave testimonies. The Holy Father then gave an extemporaneous address, consigning his prepared speech.

At the end, after the Marian prayer, the recital of the Lord’s Prayer and the final blessing, Pope Francis continued to visit the parish cemetery and the ancient Church of the Holy Rosary.

*Pending the transcription of the speech to the participants in the meeting, the following is the text of the speech prepared by the Pope for the occasion:*

**Address of the Holy Father**

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am very happy to be with you! I thank Archbishop Moses [Costa] for his warm greeting in your name. I especially thank those who offered testimonies and shared with us their love for God. I also express my gratitude to Father Mintu [Palma] for composing the prayer that we will shortly recite to Our Lady. As the Successor of Peter it is my task to confirm you in faith. But I want you to know that, through your words and presence here today, you also confirm me in faith and bring me great joy.

The Catholic community in Bangladesh is small. But you are like the mustard seed that God brings to fruition in His own time. I rejoice to see how this seed is growing and to witness first-hand the deep faith which God has given you (cf. *Mt* 13:31-32). I think of the dedicated and faithful missionaries who planted and tended this seed of faith for almost five hundred years. I will shortly visit the cemetery here and pray for these men and women who so generously served this local Church. As I look out among you, I see missionaries who continue this holy work. I also see many vocations born in this land; they are a sign of the graces with which God is blessing your land. I am particularly pleased by the presence, and the prayers, of the cloistered nuns among us.

It is good that our meeting takes place in this ancient Church of the Holy Rosary. The rosary is a beautiful meditation on the mysteries of faith that are the lifeblood of the Church and a prayer that shapes our spiritual lives and our apostolic service. Whether we are priests, religious, consecrated men or women, seminarians or novices, the prayer of the rosary inspires us, in union with Mary, to give our lives completely to Christ. It invites us to share in Mary’s *attentiveness* to God at the annunciation, Christ’s *compassion* for all humanity as He hangs upon the cross, and the Church’s *rejoicing* as she receives the Risen Lord’s gift of the Holy Spirit.

*Mary’s attentiveness.* In all of history, has there ever been anyone as attentive as Mary was at the annunciation? God prepared her for that moment and she responded in love and trust. So too the Lord has prepared us and called each of us by name. Responding to that call is a lifelong process. Every day we have to learn to be more

attentive to the Lord in prayer, meditating on His word and seeking to discern His will. I know that your pastoral work and your apostolates demand much of you, and that your days are often long and leave you tired. But we cannot bear Christ's name, or share in His mission, unless we remain first and foremost men and women rooted in love, fired by love, through a personal encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and the words of sacred Scripture. Father Abel, you reminded us of this when you spoke of the importance of fostering an intimate relationship with Jesus, for there we experience His mercy and find renewed strength for our service to others.

Attentiveness to the Lord allows us to see the world through His eyes and thus to become more sensitive to the needs of those whom we serve. We begin to understand their hopes and joys, fears and burdens, we see more clearly the many talents, charisms and gifts they bring to the building up of the Church in faith and holiness. Brother Lawrence, when you spoke of your ashram, you helped us to see the importance of assisting people to satisfy their spiritual thirst. May all of you, in the great variety of your apostolates, be a source of spiritual refreshment and inspiration to those you serve, and enable them to share their gifts ever more fully with one another in advancing the mission of the Church.

*Christ's compassion.* The rosary draws us into a meditation on the passion and death of Jesus. By entering more deeply into these sorrowful mysteries, we come to know their saving power and are confirmed in our call to share it by our lives of com-*passion* and self-giving. Priesthood and religious life are not a career. They are not a vehicle for personal advancement. They are a service, a share in Christ's own sacrificial love for His flock. By conforming ourselves daily to that we love, we come to appreciate that our lives are not our own. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us (cf. *Gal 2:20*).

We embody this compassion by accompanying people, especially in their moments of suffering and trial, helping them to find Jesus. Father Franco, thank you for drawing this to the fore – each of us is called to be a missionary, bringing Christ's mercy and love to all, especially those on the peripheries of our society. I am especially grateful for the many ways in which so many of you are engaged in the areas of social outreach, health care and education, serving the needs of your local communities and of the many migrants and refugees coming to your country. Your service to the wider community, in particular to those most in need, is a precious service to the building of a culture of encounter and solidarity.

*The Church's rejoicing.* Lastly, the rosary fills us with joy in Christ's triumph over death, His ascension to the right hand of the Father and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our world. The whole of our ministry is directed to proclaiming the joy of the Gospel. In our lives and apostolates, we are all too aware of the problems of the world and the sufferings of humanity, but we never lose confidence in the power of Christ's love to prevail over evil and the Prince of Lies who tries to deceive us. Never be discouraged by your own failures or by the challenges of ministry. If you remain attentive to the Lord in prayer and persevere in offering Christ's compassion to your brothers and sisters, then the Lord will surely fill your hearts with the comforting joy of His Holy Spirit.

Sister Mary Chandra, you shared with us the joy that flows from your religious vocation and the charism of your religious congregation. Marcelius, you too spoke of the love you and your fellow seminarians have for your vocation to be priests. Both of you reminded us that we are all asked daily to renew and deepen our joy in the Lord by striving to imitate Him ever more fully. In the beginning, this may seem daunting, but it fills our hearts with spiritual joy. For each day becomes an opportunity to begin again, to respond anew to the Lord. Never lose heart, for the Lord's patience is for our salvation (cf. *2 Pet 3:15*)! Rejoice in the Lord always!

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for your fidelity in serving Christ and His Church through the gift of your lives. I assure all of you of my prayers, as I ask you to pray for me. Let us now turn to Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, asking that she may obtain for all of us the grace to grow in holiness and to be ever more joyful witnesses of the power of the Gospel to bring healing, reconciliation and peace to our world.

**Visit to the parish cemetery and the old part of the Church**

At the end of the meeting, at 11.45 local time (6.45 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis visited the parish cemetery where many religious are buried, and paused in silent prayer before lighting a candle. Immediately afterwards the Pope entered the ancient Church of the Holy Rosary, founded by Portuguese missionaries in 1677, and now the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration.

Upon arrival the Holy Father was greeted by the bishop of Dinajpur, H.E. Msgr. Sebastian Tudu, the superior general and the superior of the Institute that supports the nearby orphanage, which houses two hundred orphans and some nuns who care for them.

At the end of his visit, following the blessing of the children, the Pope returned by car to the apostolic nunciature where he lunched with members of the papal entourage.

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