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Apostolic Trip of the Holy Father Francis to Chile and Peru (15-22 January 2018) – Holy Mass in the “Las Palmas” Air Base, Lima

Holy Mass in the “Las Palmas” Air Base, Lima

Greeting of the Holy Father at the end of the Eucharistic Celebration

Holy Mass in the “Las Palmas” Air Base, Lima

This afternoon, after leaving the apostolic nunciature, the Holy Father Francis transferred by car to the *Las Palmas* Air Base in Lima.

Upon arrival, after greetings from the Military Ordinary and the Commander of the Base, the Pope toured among the faithful and pilgrims by popemobile.

Then, at 16.15 local time (22.15 in Rome), the Holy Father presided at the Eucharistic Celebration of the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time. The Venerated Image of the Lord of Miracles was displayed on the altar.

The following is the homily pronounced by the Pope during the Holy Mass:

Homily of the Holy Father

“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!

[1] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 74.

[2] Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 38.

Greeting of the Holy Father at the end of the Eucharistic Celebration

At the end of the Eucharistic Celebration, after greetings from the archbishop of Lima, Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, the Holy Father Francis addressed some words of greeting to the faithful and pilgrims present.

After the final blessing, Pope Francis greeted the President of the Republic of Peru, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, with his wife and seven representatives of non-Catholic Christian confessions. He then transferred by car to Lima International Airport for the farewell ceremony before leaving Peru.

The following is the text of the Holy Father's greeting:

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.
