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# BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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## Being a member of the Church today is no more difficult than in other ages

This morning the Pope received in audience the participants in the Youth Day of the Landes, organized by the French diocese of Aire et Dax. The Landes are also the birthplace of Saint Vincent de Paul, and so in his address the Pope invited the young to follow his example, making God's love visible, loving in turn "with the strength of your arms and the sweat of your brow".

The pilgrimage to Rome, the pontiff added, is an opportunity to revive the gift of faith, beside the apostles Peter and Paul and all those witnesses, including many young people, who suffered martyrdom as a result of their decision to remain faithful to Jesus Christ. "This is even more important because many people think that today it is more difficult to say we are Christians and to live faith in Christ. And you certainly have experience of these difficulties, which at times become trials. In effect, the current context is not easy, also due to the painful and complex issue of the abuses committed by members of the Church. However, I would like to repeat to you that today it is no more difficult than in other ages of the Church: it is just different. Therefore, make the most of this pilgrimage to rediscover that the Church, of which you are members, 'for two thousand years ... has advanced on her pilgrim way, sharing the "joys and the hopes, the grief and the anguish" of all humanity. She has made this journey as she is, without cosmetic surgery of any kind"' (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*, 101).

"In the image of the tree emblematic of your region, the pine of the Landes, which enabled the swamp areas to be reclaimed, root yourselves in God's love to ensure that, where you live, the Church is loved", the Pope urged those present, exhorting them to let themselves "be transformed and renewed by the Holy Spirit to take Christ to every environment and to bear witness to the joy and youthfulness of the Gospel. ... In this way, always be builders of bridges between people, seeking to enable the growth of a culture of encounter and of dialogue, to contribute to the advent of an authentic human fraternity. With your attention to the little ones and the poor, you can light up stars in the night of those who, in various ways, are in difficulty. You can show, with gestures and words, that 'God is eternal newness. ... He takes us to where humanity is most wounded, where men and women, beneath the appearance of a shallow conformity, continue to seek an answer to the question of life's meaning (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* 135).

"I count on you!" he concluded. "The Church needs your zeal, your intuition, your faith and your values!"

