



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO LITHUANIA, LATVIA AND ESTONIA
[22-25 SEPTEMBER 2018]

MEETING WITH THOSE ASSISTED BY THE CHARITABLE WORKS OF THE CHURCH

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (Tallinn, Estonia)
Tuesday, 25 September 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for welcoming me to your home this afternoon. I think it is important to make this visit and to spend time here with you. Thank you for your witness and for sharing with us all the things closest to your heart.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Marina, and your husband, for the beautiful testimony that you gave us. You have been blessed with nine children, with all the sacrifices that that entails, as you clearly told us. Wherever there are children and young people, many sacrifices have to be made, but even more important, there is future, joy and hope. So it is comforting to hear you say: "We thank the Lord for the communion and the love that reigns in our house". In this land, where the winters are bitter, you do not lack the most important warmth, that of the home, the warmth born from being together as a family. With disagreements and problems? Yes, certainly! But also the hope and desire to move forward together. Yours are not just pretty words, but a clear example.

Thank you too, for sharing the testimony of those sisters who were not afraid to go out to where you were, in order to be a sign of the closeness and the outstretched hand of our God. You said

that they were like angels who came to you. That is how it is: they are like angels.

When faith is unafraid to leave comfort behind, to take a risk and dare to take a step, it shows the clear meaning of those beautiful words of the Master: “that you love one another, just as I have loved you” (*Jn* 13:34). With a love that shatters the chains that keep us isolated and separate, and instead builds bridges. With a love that enables us to create one big family, where all of us can feel at home, as in this home. With a love that exudes compassion and dignity. And this is beautiful. [He looks at Marina’s nine children sitting on a single bench, and counts them]. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Beautiful family! Beautiful family!

A faith that is missionary goes, like these sisters, through the streets of our cities, our neighbourhoods and our communities, telling people with very concrete actions: “You are part of our family, of God’s big family in which all of us have a place. Don’t stay outside. And you, sisters, you are doing this! Thank you.

I believe that that is the miracle that you, Vladimir, talked to us about. You met brothers and sisters who made it possible for your heart to be stirred and to realize that the Lord never stopped tirelessly seeking you, to clothe for his party (cf. *Lk* 15:22), to realize with joy that each one of us is his beloved son or daughter. The greatest joy of the Lord is to see us reborn. That is why he keeps giving us new opportunities, new chances. We see how important relationships are, feeling that we belong to one another, that all life is valuable, and that we are prepared to stake our lives on that.

So I would invite you to continue creating bonds. To continue going out into the neighbourhoods and saying to all sorts of people: “You, and you and you, are part of our family!” Jesus called the disciples, and today too he calls each of us, dear brothers and sisters, to continue sowing seeds of his Kingdom, passing it on. He's counting on your histories, your lives and your hands, to go through the city and to share the same experience you have had. Today, can Jesus count on you? Each of you needs to answer.

Thank you for this time you have given me. Thank you for your words of witness. I would now like to give you my blessing, so that the Lord can continue to work miracles through your hands. And please, I also need help; please, don’t forget to pray for me. Thank you!