



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
to PORTUGAL  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXXVII WORLD YOUTH DAY  
(2 - 6 August 2023)

**MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE OF SCHOLAS OCCURRENTES**

***GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS***

*Scholas Occurrentes Headquarters in Cascais*  
*Wednesday, 3 August 2023*

**[Multimedia]**

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*[Aladje Dabo, Muslim]*

Good Morning. Scholas! Scholas! Scholas!

When it was presented to me, I did not hesitate to accept it and embrace it, because it is a space where everyone shares their emotions and feelings. It is a space in which each person contributes the moral and ethical values he or she has, for the good of the community, irrespective of religion or origin. I am from Guinea Bissau and I am Muslim, but I feel that I am part of this space. And as a Muslim I feel an obligation and a duty to join and be part of this movement. Because Islam too encourages peaceful co-existence among beliefs, among the different faiths. And it encourages and is concerned about the community's well-being. It tells us what we should do, that we should take care of our neighbours, and for this reason, I would like to ask why Scholas is a place with which everyone can identify and why so much diversity is necessary to make a work of art.

*[Pope Francis]* Scholas makes all this possible: that everyone feels understood, with great respect, but it is not a static respect, but rather a dynamic one that puts one on a journey, to do things, to

express oneself by doing, like this painting, which as del Corral told me, is a Sistine Chapel painted by you. [Applause] Scholas sets you on a journey. Scholas makes you respect others and listen to the other who has something to tell you, and the other listens to you because you have something to tell him. Scholas shows you the way forward, it keeps you going. Scholas is an encounter on a journey, with everyone, no matter their nationality or religion; only looking forward and journeying together. And this is constructive, like the 3.5-kilometre mural that you painted, to arrive here.

*[Paulo Esaka Oliveira Da Silva, Evangelical]* I would like to continue a bit in the direction of diversity, to address the theme which was the basis of the two months of our work, which is chaos. We as a group, and I, too, individually, have had the opportunity of visiting various different communities, different people with different religions, different cultures, and this gave us a great opportunity to deepen ever more, not only within ourselves but also in the entire community, what it means to discover what they truly feel, the true suffering they feel, and in such a way, to give them the opportunity of expressing all this with a brushstroke, with a line on a mural. To give them the opportunity to express themselves! And this inevitably involves us. It touches our hearts and makes us think: do we have this feeling? Is this suffering part of us, part of our coexistence? Thus I would like to ask: what would be of our lives without the original chaos? Thank you.

*[Pope Francis]* You say chaos, alright. It is a crisis. Do you know where the word “crisis” comes from? When wheat was harvested, it would be sifted through [in Spanish *cribar*: he highlights the affinity between “crisis” and “cribar”]. And in people, crises are situations in life, events, organic problems, bad or good moods. It makes you *cribar*, that is, sift through, and you have to make a choice. A life without crises is a sterilized life. Do you like to drink water? Do you like it? If I give you distilled water, it is awful! Distilled water is water without crisis. A life without crisis is like distilled water. It has no flavour. It has no purpose. Only to be put in the closet and close the door. Crises have to be accepted, they should be accepted and resolved. Because it is also not good to remain in crisis, because it is a continuous suicide. It is like being about to arrive, about to arrive. You have to go through crises, you have to accept them. And rarely on your own. And this too is important in the Scholas group. Walking together to face crises together, resolving things. The important thing is to press on and grow together. Therefore, forward, even if just to eat a feijoada.

*[Mariana Barrada, Catholic]* In these last two months, we have worked a great deal to be able to paint the mural that you saw out there. But this mural actually represents chaos. The chaos which very often, when we are going through it and experiencing it up close, we do not understand, and there is great confusion. They appear to be just random lines. But the truth is that a time comes when we distance ourselves. In that distance we begin to see shapes and colours. We begin to find meaning in that chaos, to be able to think more than what we often barely see or feel, but yes, we are able to express. For me, for example, it was a very important experience because I too have experienced moments of great chaos in my life — I think we all experience them — and the truth is that listening to the other people’s stories, truly opening oneself to listen, to share and

welcome all the people who participated in this mural, was a privilege for us, maybe more than for them, for us who are here and have allowed this to take place. And all this occurred because we seek this meaning. We are all searching for this deep meaning to perceive that it is something greater than simply being here. And so, we would like to ask you: When you walked by the mural, what did you feel? What did you feel on your way here to the heart of this mural which for us is truly simply the beginning or the end? We do not know. And before you reply, on everyone's behalf, we would also like to offer you a paintbrush, this brush that represents all of us.

[Pope Francis] What you said about chaos is beautiful. There once was a man who said that the life of mankind, our human life, is to make a cosmos out of chaos, that is, out of that which has no meaning, that which is disorderly, chaotic, to make a cosmos that has meaning, that is open, inviting, all-encompassing. I do not want to be a catechist here, but if we see the structure of the story of Creation, which is a mythical story, in the true sense of the word "myth", because myths are a form of knowledge. Thus, the person who wrote down the story of Creation used that story. Incidentally, this was written a long time after the Hebrew people experienced their liberation. That is, prior to this there was the entire experience of the Exodus of the Hebrews, and then they look backwards. And how did the story begin? How did chaos turn into cosmos? And there, in poetic language, it says that one day God makes light out of chaos, another day he makes man, and he continues to create things and to transform chaos into cosmos. The same thing happens in our lives. There are moments of crisis — to return to this word — that are chaotic in which you no longer know where you are. We all go through these dark moments. Chaos. And here the personal task of those who accompany us, of a group like this, is to transform the cosmos. For me it is difficult, in this chaos of the Sistine Chapel [laughter], to think that there is a cosmos, because what is the cosmos? You are building it in the message that you are bringing forth in the journey before you. Never forget this: transforming chaos into cosmos. And this is the journey of each person. A life that remains in chaos is a failed life, and a life that has never experienced chaos is a distilled life, where everything is perfect. And distilled lives do not provide life; they die within themselves. And if a personal life or a relationship that has experienced crisis as chaos, slowly turns into cosmos within themselves, and within the community, then hats off to you!

[A young woman of *Scholas Occurrentes*] Thank you, Pope Francis, for your words. Thank you!

[Another young woman] It is a joy for us to conclude this journey this way. However, although this experience is about to end, we would like to think that the work will never end. This is why today we will conclude by beginning. And so, when a journey ends, a new one begins. We have decided to call this project: "Life Between Worlds". In fact, the entire mural is an experience and expression of life that arise from the encounter of many different realities. So today, we will make a jump and join a physical world with a virtual one.

[Another young woman] Dear Francis, we ask you to accompany us to the wall behind you and to paint the last brushstroke on this mural, but with a very special brush, capable of starting a virtual

piece that will be able to bring together the different communities of Scholas throughout the world.

*[José María del Corral, President of Scholas Occurrentes]* Pope Francis, the video, this virtual paintbrush Eugenia was talking about, is a weapon for peace. It looks like a gun because it will shoot here, but instead of killing, this brushstroke you will make on the wall, you will also be making in the virtual world. In this moment there are Scholas kids in Mozambique who have set up a device in Tofo, Mozambique, to see the brushstroke that you will now make, and to follow it in the virtual world because young people want you to be the one to unite the physical world with the virtual one, so that the virtual world may never stop being concrete and committed to reality. *[Applause]* Let us paint the wall.

*[Pope Francis]* This is the story of the Good Samaritan and none of us is exempt from being a Good Samaritan. It is an obligation that we all have. Each of us has to find it in life, but a person who stops living *[as a Good Samaritan]* has lost like at war. The Good Samaritan finds him thrown onto the ground. But earlier a Levite had passed through there, and a priest, but they had been in a rush. They gave him no importance. But in addition to being in a rush, they could not touch him because there was some blood [...] and according to the law of the time, whoever touched blood became impure. I do not know for how long they had to purify themselves. This prevented them from doing their duty, not touching. “Die, but I will not touch you; I will not become impure. Die, but I shall not become impure”. Do not forget this. How many times might the following pass through our mind: “Die, but I will not become impure”. How often do we prefer ritual purity to human closeness [...]. In the mindset of the time, the Samaritans were “wretched”. They were all wretched and merchants. They were not pure of mind, of heart. They were marginalized, but the Good Samaritan sees him, stops and the story says that he felt compassion. “Die, I will take care of my purity”. He felt compassion. I leave you with a question: what makes me feel compassion? Or do you have a heart that is so arid that you feel no compassion? Everyone answer for themselves. And what happens next? He takes him to an inn, finds him a room and tells the innkeeper: “Look, I will return in three days. Meanwhile take this, and if you need more I will pay you back on my return”. This “wretched” one was one who paid. So we have the thieves who kill, the Good Samaritan who looks after and the Levite and the priest who go away so as not to become impure. And Jesus says: this one will enter the Kingdom of Heaven because he was moved by compassion. Think about this story. Where am I? Do I cause harm to people? Where am I? Do I avoid real difficulties or get my hands dirty? Sometimes in life it is necessary to get your hands dirty so as not to sully the heart.

*[A young woman]* Thank you, dear Francis, for your gift, a real sign to continue to journey together.

*[Pope Francis]* Now I will give you my blessing, but promise me that you will ask for a blessing also for me later.

Pray for me, and those among you who do not do that or because you don't feel like it, send me

some positive vibes.

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