



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Visit to Villa Nazareth

Vatican City, 19 June 2016 – Pope Francis visited the community of Villa Nazareth yesterday, on the seventieth anniversary of its foundation by Cardinal Domenico Tardini, secretary of State between 1958 and 1961, to offer assistance and aid to poor children orphaned by the war. It was subsequently instituted as a College by the chirograph of St. John XXIII in 1963. The College is managed by the Domenico Tardini Foundation, chaired by Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, and receives free of charge students of both sexes with a history of excellence in studies but are from families who, on account of their socio-economic or cultural situation, are unable to support them.

Upon arrival the Holy Father was received by the deputy president of Villa Nazareth, Archbishop Claudio Celli, and in the chapel he met with students at the centre, for whom he commented on the Gospel account of the Good Samaritan, referring in particular to the host who receives the injured man and fulfils the Samaritan's request to take care of him and heal his wounds. "He would have thought he was crazy", said Francis: "A Samaritan who helps a Jew. ... Instead it is the host who receives the Word of God with the witness of the Samaritan 'sinner', not from the priest who ignores the wounded Jew because he is in a hurry, nor from the doctor of the law who was rushing to get to the tribunal. "The testimony of the Samaritan sows restlessness in the heart of the host. And this is what witness does".

With reference to Villa Nazareth, he affirmed that it favours the value of witness, as Archbishop Celli explained. "One does not come here to 'climb the ranks', or to make money, but rather to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to bear witness to Him. ... In silence, without explanation, with gestures. ... Witness comes and goes, you leave it and go on. Only the Lord protects it and makes it grow, just as he makes the seed grow; while the owner sleeps the plant grows".

"I hope that this work continues to be a work of witness ... for those who encounter it or who hear of it. ... And may the Lord free us of brigands – there are many of them! – may He free us of hasty priests who are always in a hurry and who do not have the time to listen; ... may He free us of the doctors who want to present faith in Jesus Christ with mathematical rigidity; and may He teach us to stop, and may He teach us that wisdom of the Gospel: to dirty our hands. May the Lord give us this grace", he concluded.

Later, in the football field, the Pope met with all the community of Villa Nazareth, and answered a number of questions posed by its members regarding Christian witness, the burden of faith in today's world, new forms of poverty, and the current challenges to the family, to professional life and to the community.

"We need credible witnesses", he said. "And when we have no witness, perhaps life goes well, we earn well, we have a profession, a good job, a family ... but we are men and women who are 'parked' in life; that is, we do not go ahead, we do not move on. Like conformists: everything is a question of habit, a habit that keeps us tranquil, we have what we need, nothing is lacking, thank God... Those who do not take risks, do not move on. Take a risk on noble ideas, risk dirtying your hands, risk just like the Samaritan in the parable took a risk. When we are more or less calm in life, there is always the temptation of paralysis. ... Go towards problems, come out of yourself and take risks".

Speaking of the difficulty of faith in today's world, he cited the tragedy of Christian communities dispersed around the world. "But the destiny of Christians is witness", he emphasised, "even in difficult situations. I do not like it, and I want to say this clearly, when we speak of the genocide of Christians, for instance in the Middle East; this is reductionism. ... The truth is a persecution that leads Christians to the faithfulness and the coherence of their faith. Let us not transform a mystery of faith to sociological reductionism".

"And faith makes us witness many difficult things in life; also with life we bear witness to faith. But let us not be deceived: cruel martyrdom is not the only way of bearing witness to Jesus Christ. It is the most, let's say, heroic way. ... But there is also everyday martyrdom: the martyrdom of honesty, the martyrdom of patience, in the education of our children; the martyrdom of fidelity to love ... the martyrdom of honesty in this world that we may describe as a paradise of bribes ... where there is a lack of courage to reject dirty money, in a world where many parents give their children bread to eat that is dirtied by bribes, that bread they buy with the bribes they earn. ... And here there is Christian martyrdom, the martyrdom of saying 'No, I don't want that'".

Francis also responded to a question on the subject of whether he had ever had a crisis of faith. "Many times I have found myself in a crisis of faith, and sometimes I have had the presumption to reproach Jesus: 'But why do You permit this?' ... and this has happened to me as a boy, as a seminarian, as a priest, as a religious, as a bishop and as Pope. 'But how come the world is like this, if You gave Your life? ... A Christian who has not felt this at some point, whose faith has not entered into a crisis, lacks something; he or she is likely a Christian who is satisfied with a certain amount of worldliness and goes ahead in life in this way. ... The Christian – this I have learned – must not be afraid of entering into crisis; it is a sign of moving ahead, that you are not anchored to the riverbank or the shore, that you have set sail and move ahead. And there are problems, crises, inconsistencies, the crisis of sin, that makes us so ashamed. And how can one not become weary? It is a grace. Ask the Lord: 'Lord, may I never be weary. Give me the grace of patience, to go ahead, to wait for peace to come'".

With regard to new forms of poverty, the Pope stressed that it is necessary to review the style of today's economy. "Nowadays there is an economy that kills. In the world, in the world economy, we do not find man or woman at the centre, but rather the god of money. And this kills us". With regard to the issue of refugees, he said, "some flee on account of hunger, because their country has been exploited and they are hungry. And some flee from war, which is an affair that makes the most money at the moment, for arms dealers. It is the same one who sells, who deals in weapons with this country that is at war with that one, and the same who sells to that country at war with this one! It is very difficult even to enable humanitarian aid to arrive in countries at war or where there are guerrillas, and very often the Red Cross has been unable to do so. But weapons always arrive: there are no border controls that manage to stop them! Why? Because it is the most lucrative business. This is the god of money".

"I am indignant, and it upsets me when people come to baptise a child, and they bring someone as a godfather who is told, 'But you did not get married in church, you can't be a godfather, because marriage, getting married in church is important'. And then they bring you another who is a crook, who exploits people, a trafficker in children, but a 'good Catholic', who gives alms to the Church. ... 'Ah yes, you can be a godfather!'. We have turned values upside down! The economy today, the way the world is organised, is immoral".

