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The Pope greets Czech and Romanian pilgrims and young members of Italian Catholic Action, praising the work of those who assist earthquake victims

After today's catechesis the Pope addressed special greetings to pilgrims from the Czech Republic and Romania.

"I welcome the faithful of the Czech Republic gathered here for their national pilgrimage on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy", he said. "I am glad to receive Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, the bishops and the authorities of the nation, and I give thanks for the gift of the stone statue of St. Agnes of Bohemia. Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that you will live this Jubilee with faith, rediscovering the beauty of practicing the works of mercy, a concrete manifestation of God's love for every one of His sons and daughters. Please give my greetings to your compatriots, and while I ask you to continue to pray for me, I impart my heartfelt apostolic blessing to you and your families".

The Holy Father also addressed a cordial greeting to the pilgrims of Romania, accompanied by bishops on their pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year of Mercy, recalling that "putting mercy into practice means serving life and communion". "Each one of you can be a leaven for life and an instrument of communion in your own family, at work, in the parish and in the groups to which you belong. I invite you to be, in daily life, a visible sign of the mercy of God, Who does not want to leave anyone in solitude or in need. Strengthened by prayer and works of mercy, let us continue with all Christians on the path to unity. I bless you and your families with all my heart. Jesus Christ be praised!"

The Pope also mentioned the Italian National Service for Civil Protection, whose members had intended to be present at today's audience, but had cancelled their attendance in order to continue their "invaluable task of aid and assistance" to those affected by the earthquake of 24 August, and whom he thanked for the dedication and generous help they have given in these days.

Finally, he greeted the boys and girls of Italian Catholic Action, who are currently holding their "Festival of Youth" on the theme, "To us the word", the final event in a year of study and debate on various themes related to the social doctrine of the Church in which the young people of Catholic Action have taken part, alongside Italian parishes and dioceses.

“I encourage you to continue the journey you have undertaken, always cultivating the values of the family and respect for creation, our common home”, said the Bishop of Rome. “I greet the participants in the Jubilee of Universities and research centres, in the hope that their teaching may be rich in values so as to form people able to make fruitful the talents that God has entrusted to them”.
