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Greetings to pilgrims: prayers and aid for our brothers and sisters in Iraq and the Middle East

In his greetings in today's Jubilee audience, the Pope addressed Polish pilgrims, recalling that tomorrow in Poland will be the Day of Solidarity with the Persecuted Church, an initiative of "Help the Church that Suffers". "The current troubled and painful circumstances urge us to support, with fervent prayer and concrete aid, our brothers who live in Iraq and in the other countries of the Middle East. Let us raise our plea to God that no-one in the world be excluded from society for reasons of religion, culture or race. May all nations, respecting the freedom of every person, form a society like a great family of brothers and sisters who live in justice, solidarity and peace".

In Italian he greeted with special affection the volunteers of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy from different countries, thanking them for their invaluable service that has allowed pilgrims to live well this experience of faith. "During these months, I have noted your discreet presence in the Square, with the Jubilee logo, and I have admired the dedication, patience and enthusiasm with which you have carried out your work", he remarked.

Finally, he addressing the young, the sick and newly-weds, he mentioned that yesterday was the feast day of St. Martin of Tours, patron of mendicants, and commented that this year we celebrate the seventeenth centenary of his birth. "May his example inspire in you, dear young people, especially European Erasmus students, the desire to perform gestures of concrete solidarity; may his trust in Christ the Lord support you, dear sick people, in the trials of illness; and may his moral rectitude remind you, dear newly-weds, of the importance of values in the education of children", he concluded.