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Greetings to pilgrims: Francis acknowledges the suffering of the Brazilian people

In his greetings to the faithful and pilgrims from different countries present in the Paul VI Hall, the Pope gave a special address to Portuguese speakers: “I also wish to acknowledge the pain of the Brazilian people following the tragedy involving the football team, and to pray for the deceased players and their families. In Italy we understand well what this means as we recall the Superga air crash in 1949. They are harsh tragedies. Let us pray for them”. The Holy Father referred to the death on 4 May 1949 of the entire Grande Torino team, when their aircraft crashed into the side of the Superga basilica in Turin, causing the death of all 31 people on board.

Among the Italians present, he greeted children affected by Batten disease, patients at Rome’s Bambino Gesù Paediatric Hospital, and the members of the Federation of institutes of educational activities, currently celebrating its seventieth anniversary, whom he invited to “continue to support Catholic schools so as to safeguard parents’ freedom of choice in the education of their children”.

On the feast day of St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, the Holy Father expressed his hope that the saint’s race to the tomb to encounter the Lord would remind the young that “our life is a pilgrimage towards the House of the Father”. “May his strength in facing martyrdom encourage you, dear sick people, when your suffering seems unbearable; and may his impassioned following of the Saviour lead you, dear newlyweds, to grasp the importance of love in your new family”.

“And on the feast day of the apostle Andrew”, he concluded, “I would like to greet the Church of Constantinople and the beloved Patriarch Bartholomaios, and to join with him and the Church of Constantinople – this beautiful Church in the name of Peter and Andrew, together – and wish them all the best, all the Lord’s blessings, and a warm embrace”.