



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Video Message of the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the Congress of Scholas Occurrentes at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis for the closing ceremony of the Congress of Scholas Occurrentes, which took place in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, on the theme: *“Between university and school: building peace through the culture of encounter”* (2-5 July 2017).

Video Message of the Holy Father

At this moment we the young and adults of Israel, Palestine and other parts of the world, of different nationalities, beliefs and situations, all breathe the same air, we all walk the same earth, our common home. There are many histories; each person has his own. There are as many histories as there are people, but there is one life. Therefore I wish to celebrate these days spent here in Jerusalem, because you yourselves, setting out from your differences, have reached unity. No-one taught you this. You lived it. You have had the courage to look each other in the eye, you have had the courage to lay bare your gaze, and this is indispensable in order to create an encounter. In the nakedness of the gaze there are no answers, there is openness. Openness to all that is other to me. In the nakedness of the gaze we become permeable to life. Life does not pass us by. It passes through us and moves us, and this is passion. Once we are open to life and to others, to those next to us, an encounter is produced, and in this encounter meaning is created. We all have meaning. We all have a meaning in life. None of us is a “no”. We are all a “yes”, and so when we find the meaning it is as if our soul were enlarged. And we need to give words to this meaning. To give it a form that can contain it. To express in some way what has happened, and this is creation. In addition, when we realize that life has meaning and that this meaning transcends us, we feel the need to celebrate it. We feel the need for feast, as a human expression of the celebration of meaning. And so we find the deepest emotion we can feel. A sentiment that exists in us, for and notwithstanding everything, because of and despite everything. This sentiment is gratitude. *Scholas* intuit that it is necessary to educate in this. Education opens us to what is unknown, that leads us to that place in which the waters have not yet separated. Free of prejudice, or rather, free of prior judgements that stall us, so that from there we can dream and seek out new paths. Therefore, we adults cannot deprive our children and young people of the capacity to dream, nor to play, which in a certain sense is a dream with eyes open. If we do not allow the child to play it is because we do not know how to play, and if we do not know how to play, we

understand neither gratitude, nor gratuitousness, nor creativity.

This meeting has taught us that we have the duty to listen to children and to generate a context of hope so that these dreams grow and are shared. A dream, when it is shared, becomes the utopia of a people, the possibility of creating a new way of living. Our utopia, that of all of us who in some way form *Scholas* is that of creating with this education a culture of encounter. In people we can unite, promoting the diversity of cultures to reach not uniformity, no, but rather harmony, and how much this atomized world is in need of it! This world that fears what is different, that starting from this fear at times builds walls that end up transforming into reality our worst nightmare, which is that of living as enemies. How much our world needs us to come out and meet each other! Therefore today I wish to thank you, adults, academics of the Hebrew University and of many universities all around the world who are present here, because you have not closed yourselves up, but rather have offered your precious knowledge in the service of listening. And to the young people of Israel and Palestine, and to those invited from other countries in the world, thank you for having had the courage to dream, to look for meaning, to create, to thank, to celebrate, and to set your mind, hands and heart to making the culture of encounter a reality. Thank you.
