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Video Message of the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the World Indigenous Youth Gathering (EMJI)

From 17 to 21 January 2019, in Soloy, diocese of David, Panama, the World Indigenous Youth Gathering (EMJI) will take place, to be attended by over a thousand young indigenous people from various parts of the world.

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the meeting, for the inauguration of the event:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear young people,

At the end of World Youth Day in Krakow, in July 2016, I told the young volunteers: “We assume the memory of our past to build the future with courage”. And that is the motto that you chose for this World Indigenous Youth Gathering, that has brought you together from January 17 to 21 of this year (pre-WYD) in Soloy, Ngäbe-Buglé District, diocese of David, Panama.

I congratulate you because it is the first time that a pre-WYD meeting has been organized specifically for young members of indigenous peoples, of indigenous populations, worldwide. I wish to thank the Indigenous Pastoral Section of the Episcopal Conference of Panama, supported by CELAM, for this initiative.

Dear young people, I invite you to this Gathering, which brings together hundreds of young people from different native peoples, to reflect and celebrate on your faith in Jesus Christ from the millennia-long richness of your original cultures. I urge you to make this an opportunity to respond to the invitation made to young people, at other times, to be grateful for the history of your peoples and courageous in the face of the challenges that surround you, so as to move forward filled with hope in the construction of another possible world. Return to the cultures of origin. Take possession of your roots, because from the roots comes the force that will make you

grow, flourish and bear fruit. In addition, it should be a way of showing the indigenous face of our Church in the WYD environment, and of affirming our commitment to protect the Common Home and to collaborate in the construction of another possible, more equitable and more humane world.

Undoubtedly, the topics that, according to the agenda, will be the object of your reflection, will stimulate a search for answers, from an evangelical perspective, to so many scandalous situations of marginalization, exclusion, rejection and impoverishment to which millions of young people, especially young people belonging to indigenous populations, are condemned in this world. May your action, the awareness of belonging to your people, be a reaction against this throwaway culture, against this culture of forgetting roots, that drives towards a future that is increasingly liquid and gaseous, without foundation.

Boys and girls, take charge of your cultures! Take charge of your roots! But do not stop there. From those roots may you grow, flourish, bear fruit. A poet said that "what the tree has visibly in bloom thrives on what is buried beneath". The roots. But roots brought into the future. Projected towards the future. This is your challenge today.

It will be a pleasure for me to meet you in Panama. And as that moment arrives, I wish you every success in the Gathering, and I give you my blessing.

Jatuaida, Jamorogodre.

God bless you!
