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Apostolic Trip of Pope Francis to Panama for the 34th World Youth Day (23-28 January 2019) – Visit to the Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano Juan Díaz and Angelus

Visit to the Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano Juan Díaz and Angelus

At 10.45 local time (16.45 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis paid a visit to the *Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano Juan Díaz*, a foundation promoted by the Panamanian Church for the assistance of poor young people and adults affected by AIDS.

Upon arrival, he was received at the entrance of the structure by the four directors of the ecclesiastical institutions that assist young people (*Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano*, *Centro Juan Pablo II*, *Hogar San José* and *Kkottongnae Panamá*). Sixty young people assisted by the four centres were present in the courtyard.

After a brief welcome greeting from the director of the *Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano Juan Díaz*, Fr. Domingo Escobar, the presentation of a video and a dance performance, the Pope gave an address and subsequently led the recitation of the Angelus prayer. Then, after the blessing of the first stone of the two aid centres and the exchange of gifts, he returned by car to the apostolic nunciature, where he lunched with the members of the papal entourage.

The following is Pope Francis' address, pronounced during his visit to the *Casa Hogar del Buen Samaritano Juan Díaz* and his words prior to the recitation of the Angelus:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Young Friends,
Dear Directors, Associates, Pastoral Workers,
Dear Friends,

Thank you, Father Domingo, for your words of greeting on behalf of all present. I wanted this meeting with you here from this Good Samaritan Home, and also with the other young people from the John Paul II Centre, the Saint Joseph Home of the Sisters of Charity and the “House of Love” of the Congregation of the Brothers of Jesus of Kkottonngae. Being with you today gives me reason for renewed hope. Thank you for giving me this.

In preparing for this meeting, I was able to read the testimony of a member of this Home that touched my heart. It said: “Here I was reborn”. This home, and all the centres you represent, are a sign of the new life that the Lord wants to give us. It is easy to confirm the faith of some of our brothers and sisters when we see it at work in anointing wounds, renewing hope and encouraging faith. Nor are those we might call the “primary beneficiaries” of your homes the only ones to be reborn; here the Church and the faith are also born; here the Church and the faith are continually recreated through love.

We begin *to be reborn* when the Holy Spirit grants us eyes to see others, as Father Domingo said to us, not only as the people we live with – and that is already saying a lot – but as *our neighbours*. To see others as our neighbours.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus was asked one day: “Who is my neighbour?” (cf. *Lk 10:29*). He did not respond with theories, or give a fine, lofty speech. Instead he told a story – the parable of the Good Samaritan – a concrete example drawn from the real life that you all know and experience. My neighbour is a person, *a face* that I meet along the way, one that makes us move and be moved. To move from our fixed ways of doing things and our priorities, and to be moved so deeply by what that person is experiencing that we stop and make room for him or her on our journey. That is what the Good Samaritan realized when he saw the man left half-dead on the side of the road, not only by bandits but also by the indifference of a priest and a levite who could not be bothered to come to his aid. For indifference can also kill; it can wound and kill. Some for a few miserable coins, others for fear of becoming unclean. Whatever their reason, whether contempt or social aversion, they saw nothing wrong in leaving that man lying on the roadside. The Good Samaritan, whether in the parable or in all of your homes, shows us that our neighbour is first of all a person, someone with a real, particular face, not something to avoid or ignore, whatever his or her situation may be. And that face reveals our humanity, so often suffering and overlooked.

Our neighbour, then, is a face that wonderfully inconveniences our lives, because it reminds us and points our steps towards what is really important, and it frees us from all that is trite and superficial in the way we follow the Lord.

To be here is to touch the maternal face of the Church, which is capable of prophesying and *creating a home, creating community*. The Church’s face is usually unseen; it passes by unnoticed. Yet it is a sign of God’s concrete mercy and tender love, a living sign of the good news of the resurrection that even now is at work in our lives.

To create a “home” is to create a family. It is to learn to feel connected to others by more than the utilitarian and practical bonds, to be united in such a way so as to feel that our life is a bit more human. To create a home is to let prophecy take flesh and make our hours and days less cold, less indifferent and anonymous. It is to create bonds by simple, everyday acts that all of us can do. A home, and this we all know very well, demands that everyone work together. No one can be indifferent or aloof, since each is a stone needed to build the home. And that also means asking the Lord to grant us the grace to learn to be patient, to forgive one another, to start over each day. How many times should I forgive and start over? Seventy times seven times, as many times as necessary. To create strong bonds requires confidence and trust nurtured daily by patience and forgiveness.

And that is how the miracle takes place: we feel that here we are reborn, here we are all reborn, because we feel God’s caress that enables us to dream of a more human world, and therefore of a world more divine.

I thank all of you for your example and your generosity. I also thank your institutions, and the volunteers and benefactors. I thank all those who have made it possible for God’s love to become ever more concrete, more real by gazing into the eyes of those around us and acknowledging that we are all neighbours.

Now that we are about to pray the Angelus, I entrust you to our Blessed Lady. We ask her, as a good Mother, full of tender love and closeness, to teach us to make an effort each day to discover who our neighbours are, and to help us go out quickly to meet them, to give them a home, an embrace, where care and fraternal love meet. This is a mission involving every one of us.

I encourage you now to place beneath her mantle all the concerns and needs you may have, all your sorrows and hurts, so that, as a Good Samaritan, she will come to us and aid us by her maternal love and with her smile, the smile of a Mother.

Angelus Domini ...

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

today is the International Day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. We need to keep alive the memory of the past, the tragedies of the past, and to learn from the pages of history so as to never again repeat the same mistakes. We continue to make relentless efforts to cultivate justice, to increase concord and to sustain integration, in order to be instruments of peace and builders of a better world.

I wish to express my grief for the tragedies that have struck the State of Minas Gerais in Brasil and the State of Hidalgo in Mexico. I entrust to the mercy of God all the victims and, at the same time, I pray for the injured while conveying the assurances of affection and spiritual closeness to their families and the entire population.

Here in Panama my mind has often turned to the people of Venezuela, to whom I feel particularly united in these days. In view of the grave situation that they are experiencing, I pray to the Lord that a just and peaceful solution may be pursued and reached, in respect of human rights while seeking exclusively the good of all the inhabitants of the country. I invite you to pray, placing this request under the protection of Our Lady of Coromoto, Patroness of Venezuela.

To Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, we likewise entrust the victims of the terrorist attack perpetrated this Sunday in the Cathedral of Polo in the Philippine, while Mass was being celebrated. I reiterate my firm condemnation of this act of violence, which brings new grief to this Christian community, and I offer up my prayers for the deceased and for the injured. May the Lord, Prince of Peace, convert the hearts of the violent and grant to the people of that region a peaceful coexistence.

And today, on the final day of the World Youth Day, as part of the Offertory at Mass, I was given a list of twenty young people who were not able to know how the World Day was progressing via television or radio, the young students from the Police School of Cadets, "General Francisco de Paula Santander", in Colombia, killed by terrorist hatred. An offering was made for them during Mass, and in their memory during this Angelus I wish to present their names, and every one, in their hearts, if not aloud but in the silence of the heart, bring to mind that word that is used in these institutions when a dead member is named: "present". May they be present before God. Cadet Luis Alfonso Mosquera Murillo; Cadet Óscar Javier Saavedra Camacho; Cadet Jonathan Efraín Suescón García; Cadet Manjardez Contreras Juan Felipe; Cadet Juan Diego Ayala Anzola; Cadet Juan David Rodas Agudelo; Cadet Diego Alejandro Pérez Alarcón; Cadet Jonathan Ainer León Torres; Cadet Alán Paul Bayona Barreto; Cadet Diego Alejandro Molina Peláez; Cadet Carlos Daniel Campaña Huertas; Cadet Diego Fernando Martínez Galvéz; Cadet Juan Esteban Marulanda Orozco; Cadet César Alberto Ojeda Gómez; Cadet Cristian Fabián González Portilla; Cadet Fernando Alonso Iriarte Agresoth; Cadet Ercia Sofía Chico Vallejo; Cadet Cristian Camilo Maquilón Martínez; Cadet Steven Rolando Prada Riaño; Cadet Iván René Muñoz Parra. We ask you Lord, to grant them peace, and grant peace to the people of Colombia. Amen.

[Blessing]

Once again I thank you for what you are doing here: it is great and wonderful. May God bless you, and pray for me. Thank you!
