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The Holy Father Francis' words of thanks at the end of the Spiritual Exercises (Ariccia, 15 March 2019)

The following are the words of thanks addressed by the Holy Father Francis this morning to the preacher of the Spiritual Exercises, the Abbot Bernardo Francesco Maria Gianni, O.S.B. Oliv., of the Abbey of San Miniato al Monte, at the end of the Spiritual Exercises in Ariccia:

Words of the Holy Father

I wish to thank you, brother Bernardo, for your help in these days. I have been struck by your work to allow us to enter, as did the Word, into the human; and to understand that God always makes Himself present in the human. He did so for the first time in the incarnation of the Word, total, but He is present also in the traces He leaves in the human. As in the incarnation in the Word – *indivisa et inconfusa* – He is there. And our work is perhaps to go forward...

I thank you very much for this work. I thank you for speaking about memory: this "deuteronomic" dimension that we forget; for speaking about hope, work, patience, how to show us the way to have that "memory of the future" that we always take forward. Thank you!

And it made me laugh when you said that some people, reading the titles of the meditations, perhaps did not understand what the Curia did: perhaps they had hired a tourist guide to show them Florence and its poets... And I too at the first meditation was a little disorientated, and then I understood the message. Thank you.

I thought a lot about a Conciliar document – *Gaudium et spes* – perhaps the document that has encountered most resistance, even today. And in that moment I saw you in that way: with the courage of the Council Fathers when they signed that document. I thank you very much. Pray for us, we who are all sinners, all of us, but we want to go ahead in this way, serving the Lord. Thank you very much, and greet the monks on my behalf and on our behalf. Thank you!

