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Video Message of the Holy Father to participants in the retreat promoted by the John 17 Movement

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the retreat promoted by the *John 17 Movement*, held online from *Saint Joseph's Seminary*, New York, on the theme "Relational Reconciliation, a New Way to Christian Reconciliation" (cf. *Jn 17*, 13-17):

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear friends of the *John 17* Movement,

I know that you are gathered in New York at Saint Joseph's Seminary, whose Rector is Bishop James Massa, with the participation of Cardinal Joseph Tobin. I greet you cordially and thank you for your commitment to *John 17*. It is a special retreat on "Relational Reconciliation, a New Way to Christian Reconciliation" (cf. *Jn 17*: 13-17).

At the Pentecost vigil, organised by the CHARIS Commission for Christian Unity, at the moment broadcast to the whole world from Jerusalem, I recalled just how moved I was by the expression in the Acts of the Apostles with which they described the first Christian community as those who met it: "See how they love each other".

The John 17 Movement is about those who, around the table, drinking a cappuccino, dining or eating a gelato, discover they are brothers, not on account of their colour, nor their nationality, nor their place of origin, nor the different forms in which they live out their faith, but as children of the one same Father. And even if there is no table, even if there is no cappuccino, even if there is no ice cream, even if there is no coffee, because there is poverty and there is way, we are still brothers, and we must say this to each other. Without thinking of our place of origin, or of our nationality, or of the colour of our skin: we are children of the one same Father.

Love has no need for profound theological knowledge, which is however necessary. Love is an encounter of life, first with the Lord Jesus, with the person of Jesus, and from there on, from that encounter of love, friendship, brotherhood and the certainty of being children of the same Father are born. Life that is shared and dedicated to

a higher purpose: love can change the world! Everything starts there, from a fraternal encounter, love can change the world, but first it changes us.

Together in love, we Christians can change the world, we can change ourselves, because God is Love!

I know that we had a date to meet in recent months and the pandemic did not permit this. We will meet later, hopefully soon, before the end of the year.

I urge you to continue to walk together, sharing life and brotherly love. The *John 17* Movement and the testimony you have shared with me each time we have met gives me hope and gives me joy. As Joe Tosini says, love is the most important thing in the world, yet no one teaches how to love! Whether you love or not, the love that became flesh, the love that gave life for us, that is the way. Very often we confuse love with a kind of platonic, idealistic philosophy. Love is concrete, love gives its life for others, as Jesus gave it for us. Perhaps because love is not taught, it is lived, and you are teaching us by living it.

May God bless you! See you soon! And please do not forget to pray for me, because this work is not easy at all. See you soon!

Francis
