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Audience with families of the Polish miners who perished in coal mines on 20 and 23 April 2022

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the families of the Polish miners who lost their lives in coal mines on 20 and 23 April 2022.

The following is the Pope's greeting to those present at the audience:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Thank you for your visit. Before you, I don't know what to say. Silence is compassionate. Losing a husband, a father in an accident like this, is awful. And also the fact that some were buried there, in the mines... I would not like to say words, I want to tell you only that I am close to you, very close, with the closeness of the heart, and I pray with you in this very difficult and painful situation.

Prayer, at times, in these moments... It seems that God is not listening to us. There is the silence of the dead and the silence of God. And this silence, at times, makes us angry. Do not be afraid: that anger is a prayer. It is one of the "whys" we repeat to ourselves continually in these situations. And the answer is: "In darkness the Lord is close to us. We do not know how, but he is close to us".

I too will pray in silence, and I give you my blessing. Then I will greet you personally.

[Silence for personal prayer]

[Blessing]