



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Video Message of the Holy Father to participants in the Med24 Meeting

The following is the text of the Video Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to participants in the Med24 Meeting – *Pilgrims of hope, builders of peace*, the fourth stage of the Mediterranean Meetings, following the events in Bari, Florence and Marseille, taking place in Tirana, Albania, from 15 to 21 September 2024:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear Friends, dear young people from Albania and from the Mediterranean area, it's a great joy for me to know you are gathered in Tirana ten years after my visit to your beloved country, in 2014 – and I don't forget, be sure! –, and I remember of that unforgettable journey, when I met your people, a people enriched with several different faces but united by the same courage. As I told in that occasion to the youth: "You are the new generation of Albania", now I want to add, for you dear young people coming from the five shores of the Mediterranean Sea: "you, the new generation, are the future of the Mediterranean region".

We are all pilgrims of hope, walking in search of the truth, living our faith and building peace – because peace needs to be built! God loves every man; He makes no differences among us. The fraternity between the five shores of the Mediterranean that you are establishing it is the answer – really it's an answer! –, the best answer we can offer to the conflicts and the deadly indifferences.

I invite you to learn together to discern the signs of the times. Contemplate the difference of your traditions like a richness, a richness God wants to be. Unity is not uniformity, and the diversity of your cultural and religious identities is a gift of God. Unity in diversity. Let mutual esteem grow among you, following the witness of your forefathers.

Put in the middle the voice of those who are not considered, and here I'm thinking of the poorest people, all those who suffer to be regarded as a burden or a trouble. I'm thinking about those who are forced to leave their countries, even in a very young age, to search a better future. Please, take care of everybody: they are not simply numbers, but persons, and each person is sacred. We are talking about individual faces whose dignity

must be improved and protected. Let's renounce the culture of indifference, to open the door of acceptance and friendship.

Just like in a great Lake of Tiberias that is now entrusted to your care, you inhabit the shores of this sea that connects you – Mediterranean connects you! It gathers you just like in a beautiful garden you are called to cultivate. Then you preserve the spirit of service in every circumstance, taking care of each creature entrusted to your hands. You may walk following the footsteps of your martyrs. Their courage is a living witness that can inspire your commitment in resisting to all violence disfiguring our humanity, as Blessed Maria Taci made, when she was only 22 years old.

I commend all of you to Mary, "Mother of Good Counsel". She had always turned her maternal glaze, in love as in sorrow, on the events of your land. You learn from her Immaculate Heart to be unresting pilgrims of hope and to follow the signs of God, so that Mediterranean area may recover his best feature: the expression of fraternity and peace, and it could be no longer a graveyard!
