



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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**Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Francis in Luxembourg and Belgium (26 to 29 September 2024)
– Meeting in the parish of Saint Gilles**

This morning, after celebrating Holy Mass in private, before leaving the Nunciature, Pope Francis briefly greeted the vice president of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinás; the vice chair of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica; the representative of the World Health Organization at the European Union, Oxana Domentii; and the regional director of the World Health Organization for Europe, Hans Kluge. Then, as he did yesterday, paused to greet the people, particularly the children and young people, who had come to meet him in front of the Nunciature.

After leaving the Nunciature, he transferred to the Church of Saint Gilles in Brussels, where he visited the homeless people assisted by the parish before heading to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Koekelberg.

The following are the Holy Father's words of greeting to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning,

Thank you for the invitation to breakfast! It is nice to start the day among friends, and such is the atmosphere at Saint Gilles.

I thank Marie-Françoise, Simon and Francis for what they said, and I am happy to see how the love here continually fuels everyone's fellowship and creativity. You even invented La Biche de Saint Gilles, and I imagine it is a very good beer! In the afternoon, I will tell you whether it is good or not!

As Marie-Françoise said, "mercy points the way to hope" – very beautiful – and looking at each other with love helps everyone – everyone! – to turn to the future with confidence and to set out anew each day. Charity is like a

fire that warms the heart, and there is no woman or man on earth who does not need its warmth.

It is true that there are not just a few problems to be confronted, you know this well, as Simon told us. We sometimes face rejection and misunderstanding, as Francis remarked, but the joy and strength that come precisely from shared love are greater than any difficulties. Whenever we engage in the dynamics of solidarity and mutual care, we realize that we receive much more than we give (cf. *Lk 6:38; Acts 20:35*).

At the end of our meeting, a statue of Saint Lawrence will be gifted to the parish. He was a deacon and martyr of the early centuries. When his accusers asked him for the treasures of the Church, he famously presented the most fragile members of the Roman Christian Community to which he belonged. They are the most important, but also the most fragile: the poor, the needy.

It was not a figure of speech or a mere provocation. It was and is the plain truth. The Church has its greatest wealth in its weakest members, and if we really want to know and show its beauty, it will do us all good to give ourselves to each other like that, in our littleness, in our poverty, without pretension and with much love. This was first taught to us by the Lord Jesus, who became poor in order to enrich us with his poverty (cf. *2 Cor. 8:9*).

Dear friends, thank you for welcoming me among you and thank you for the journey you are making together. Thank you also for breakfast! I bless you all and pray for you. And I ask you, please, pray for me as well. Thank you.
