



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO RIO DE JANEIRO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXVIII WORLD YOUTH DAY

VISIT TO THE COMMUNITY OF VARGINHA (MANGUINHOS)

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Rio de Janeiro

Thursday, 25 July 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

It is wonderful to be here with you! It is wonderful! From the start, my wish in planning this visit to Brazil was to be able to visit every district throughout the nation. I would have liked to knock on every door, to say “good morning”, to ask for a glass of cold water, to take a *cafezinho*, - not a glass of grappa! – to speak as one would to family friends, to listen to each person pouring out his or her heart – parents, children, grandparents ... But Brazil is so vast! It is impossible to knock on every door! So I chose to come here, to visit your community, this community, which today stands for every district in Brazil. How wonderful it is to be welcomed with such love, generosity, and joy! One need only look at the way you have decorated the streets of the community; this is a further mark of affection, it comes from your heart, from the heart of all Brazilians in festive mood. Many thanks to each of you for this kind welcome! And I thank Rangler and Joana for their kind words.

1. From the moment I first set foot on Brazilian soil, right up to this meeting here with you, I have been made to feel welcome. And it is important to be able to make people welcome; this is something even more beautiful than any kind of ornament or decoration. I say this because when we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them – some food, a place in our homes, our time – not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched. I am well aware that when someone needing food knocks at your door, you always find a way of sharing food; as the proverb says, one can always “add more water to the beans”! Is it possible to add more water to the beans? ... Always? ... And you do so with love, demonstrating that true riches consist not in material things, but in the heart!

And the Brazilian people, particularly the humblest among you, can offer the world a valuable

lesson in solidarity; this word solidarity is too often forgotten or silenced, because it is uncomfortable. It almost seems like a bad word ... solidarity. I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is not, I repeat, not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!

I would like to encourage the efforts that Brazilian society is making to integrate all its members, including those who suffer most and are in greatest need, through the fight against hunger and deprivation. No amount of "peace-building" will be able to last, nor will harmony and happiness be attained in a society that ignores, pushes to the margins or excludes a part of itself. A society of that kind simply impoverishes itself, it loses something essential. We must never, never allow the throwaway culture to enter our hearts! We must never allow the throwaway culture to enter our hearts, because we are brothers and sisters. No one is disposable! Let us always remember this: only when we are able to share do we become truly rich; everything that is shared is multiplied! Think of the multiplication of the loaves by Jesus! The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!

2. I would also like to tell you that the Church, the "advocate of justice and defender of the poor in the face of intolerable social and economic inequalities which cry to heaven" (*Aparecida Document*, 395), wishes to offer her support for every initiative that can signify genuine development for every person and for the whole person. Dear friends, it is certainly necessary to give bread to the hungry – this is an act of justice. But there is also a deeper hunger, the hunger for a happiness that only God can satisfy, the hunger for dignity. There is neither real promotion of the common good nor real human development when there is ignorance of the fundamental pillars that govern a nation, its non-material goods: *life*, which is a gift of God, a value always to be protected and promoted; the *family*, the foundation of coexistence and a remedy against social fragmentation; *integral education*, which cannot be reduced to the mere transmission of information for purposes of generating profit; *health*, which must seek the integral well-being of the person, including the spiritual dimension, essential for human balance and healthy coexistence; *security*, in the conviction that violence can be overcome only by changing human hearts.

3. I would like to add one final point, one final point. Here, as in the whole of Brazil, there are many young people. You young people, my dear young friends, you have a particular sensitivity towards injustice, but you are often disappointed by facts that speak of corruption on the part of people who put their own interests before the common good. To you and to all, I repeat: never yield to discouragement, do not lose trust, do not allow your hope to be extinguished. Situations can change, people can change. Be the first to seek to bring good, do not grow accustomed to evil, but defeat it with good. The Church is with you, bringing you the precious good of faith, bringing Jesus Christ, who "came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (*Jn 10:10*).

Today, to all of you, especially to the residents of this Community of Varginha, I say: you are not alone, the Church is with you, the Pope is with you. I carry each of you in my heart and I make my own the intentions that you carry deep within you: thanksgiving for joys, pleas for help in times of difficulty, a desire for consolation in times of grief and suffering. I entrust all this to the intercession of Our Lady of Aparecida, Mother of all the poor of Brazil, and with great affection I impart my blessing. Thank you!