



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO MEXICO

(12-18 FEBRUARY 2016)

***IN-FLIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FROM MEXICO TO ROME***

Papal Flight

Wednesday, 17 February 2016

[Multimedia]

Maria Eugenia Jimenez Calíz from the Mexican newspaper 'Milenio' recalled the 'desaparecidos' in her country, in particular, 43 students from Ayotzinapa who are missing. She asked the Holy Father why he had not met with their families and if he would like to send them a message.

In fact, if you read my messages, there are continual references to those who have been assassinated, to the dead, to the lives taken by all those gangs involved in drug and human trafficking. That is, I spoke about these problems as a plague of Mexico. There was an attempt to receive some people — and there were many groups, among them even some opposed to one another, infighting. That is why I preferred to see them all at Mass in Juárez or at another, if they preferred, but I was open to this possibility. It was practically impossible to receive all the groups, which, on the other hand, were fighting among themselves. It's a hard situation to understand, especially for me because I am a foreigner. But I believe that Mexico as a society is a victim of all this: of crimes, of missing persons, of people being thrown away. I spoke about it in every address I could, and you can check that. It's a terrible sorrow that I carry, because this nation does not deserve such tragedy.

Javier Solórzano from Canal 11 in Mexico broached the subject of pedophilia, which is a very sensitive topic in the country. The case of Fr Maciel left terrible marks, most of all for the victims, some of whom continue to feel left unprotected by the Church, while others also persevere in their

faith, and some have even gone on to become priests. The journalist asked the Pope if he considered meeting with the victims and then about his thoughts on the practice of simply moving abuser-priests from one parish to another.

Very well, I will begin with the second. A bishop who moves a priest, who has been proven to be a pedophile, to a new parish is reckless, and the best thing he can do is present his resignation. Is that clear?

Second, going back to Maciel's case. And here allow me to honour a man who fought even when he did not have the power to step in, yet he did: Ratzinger. Cardinal Ratzinger deserves applause. Yes, a round of applause for him. He had all the documentation. When he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he took everything in his hands, he conducted investigations and he pushed forward, forward, forward... but he couldn't go any further in the execution. If you remember, 10 days before John Paul II died, Ratzinger told the whole Church, at the *Via Crucis* on Good Friday, that she needed to be purified of "filth". And at the *Missa pro eligendo Pontifice* — he is no fool, he knew he was going to be a candidate — he didn't care to hide his position, he said exactly the same thing. What I mean to say is that he was a brave man who helped so many open this door. Thus, I want to remind you of him, because sometimes we forget all this hidden work that laid the foundation for "taking the lid off the pot".

Third, we are doing quite a lot of work. Speaking with the Cardinal Secretary of State, also with the group of nine Cardinal advisors, after listening to them, I chose to appoint a third adjunct secretary to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who is concerned solely with these cases, because the Congregation cannot manage with everything it has to do, and therefore one who knows how to deal with this. Furthermore, the Court of Appeals was established, presided by Archbishop Scicluna, which deals with cases of second instance, when there is recourse; cases of the first instance are handled by the "*feria quarta*" [the fourth day] — as we call it, because it convenes on Wednesdays — of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. When there is recourse, the case goes back to the first instance, and that is not fair. Thus, the second recourse, already having a legal profile, a defense attorney. However it needs to be evaluated — because we are rather behind in handling cases — so that cases can be presented. Another reality that is functioning very well is the Commission for the Protection of Minors. It is not strictly reserved to cases of pedophilia, but to the protection of minors. In that context I met for an entire morning with six of them — two German, two Irish and two English people — men and women, victims of abuse. And I also met with victims in Philadelphia. There too, I spent one morning meeting with victims. In other words, work is being done. But I thank God that the lid is off of this pot, and we must continue to keep it uncovered, and be attentive.

Lastly, I would like to say that this is a monstrosity. A priest is consecrated so as to lead a child to God; were he to "devour" that child in a diabolical sacrifice, he would destroy the child. Then, with regard to Maciel, returning to the institute [Legion of Christ], it was all presented in an intervention,

and today the institute, the administration of the institute is a semi-commissariat. That is, the general superior is elected by a council, by the general chapter, however the Pope chooses the vicar. Two general counselors are elected by the general chapter and another two are chosen by the Pope, in such a way that we are helping them to come to terms with the past. Whoever did not understand, ask a Spanish-speaker to explain what I said.

Philip Pullella from Reuters referred to statements made by Donald Trump, who is campaigning to be the Republican candidate for President of the United States. In an interview, Trump called the Pope a political pawn. He also said that, if elected, he would build a wall 2,500 kilometres long between the United States and Mexico and deport 11 million illegal immigrants. The journalists asked what Pope Francis thought about such statements and whether a Catholic in the U.S. could vote for this kind of person.

Well, thank God he said that I am a political person, because Aristotle defined the human being as a “political animal”: at least, I am human! And that I am a pawn... well, perhaps, I don’t know... I’ll leave that to your judgement and that of the people.... Then, a person who thinks only of building walls, wherever it may be, and not of building bridges, is not Christian. This is not in the Gospel. What you were asking me, who to vote for or not: I won’t interfere. I only say: if a man says these things, he is not Christian. We have to see if he said these things, and thus I will give him the benefit of the doubt.

Jean-Louis de la Vaissière of ‘France Presse’ spoke about the Pope’s meeting with Russian Patriarch Kirill, about the Joint Declaration and the fact that Greek Catholics in Ukraine feel betrayed. The journalist then asked the Pope whether the Patriarch had invited him to go to Moscow or if he might consider going to Crete for the Pan-Orthodox Council.

I’ll start with the last. I will be present in spirit and through a message. I would like to go to greet them in the Pan-Orthodox Council: they are brothers, but I must be respectful. I know that they would like to invite Catholic observers, and this is a beautiful bridge. I will be there, behind the Catholic observers, praying with my deepest hopes that the Orthodox may go forward, forward, because they are brothers and their bishops are bishops like us. Then, Kirill. My brother. We kissed and embraced each other, and then had an hour-long discussion...

Fr Lombardi interrupted: “two hours!”...

Two hours! For two hours we spoke like brothers, sincerely, and no one knows what we talked about, only what we said at the end, publicly, regarding what we experienced in the discussion. Third: that article, those statements in Ukraine. When I read this, I was a bit concerned, because it was Svjatoslav Shevchuk who said that the Ukrainian people, or some or a few Ukrainians, or many, feel deeply disappointed and betrayed. First of all, I know Svjatoslav well. In Buenos Aires, we worked together for four years. When he was elected Major Archbishop — at 42, a good man!

— he returned to Buenos Aires to collect his things. He came to me and gave me a small icon of Our Lady of Tenderness, and he told me: “This has accompanied me all my life. I want to leave it with you, who have accompanied me these years”. It is one of the few things that I brought from Buenos Aires and I keep it on my desk. I respect this man and we are familiar — we speak on a first name basis, so it seemed a bit odd to me. I remember something that I said to you before: in order to understand a story, a statement, you need to find the hermeneutics of the whole. When was this said? It was in a statement on 14 February, a Sunday, last Sunday. An interview, given by Fr... I don’t remember [his name], a Ukrainian priest; [the interview] was given and published in Ukraine. That story — the interview is a little more than two pages, more or less — that account is in the third to last paragraph, so small. I read the interview, and I will say this: Shevchuk is on the side of dogma, he calls himself a son of the Church, in communion with the Bishop of Rome, with the Church; he speaks of the Pope, of the Pope’s closeness, and of himself, of his faith and the faith of the Orthodox people. There is no difficulty on the dogmatic side, it is orthodoxy in the best sense of the word, that is, Catholic doctrine. Then, as in every interview — this one, for example — a person has the right to voice his piece, and this he did not do with regard to the meeting, because regarding the meeting he says: “It is a good thing and we have to move forward”. In this second chapter, the personal ideas that a person has.... For example, what I said about bishops who relocate pedophile priests, that they would do better to resign, that is one thing... not a matter of dogma, but it is what I think. Thus, he has his personal ideas that are up for discussion, and he has a right to have them. Everything he says is about the Document: that is the problem. With regard to the fact of the meeting he says: “This is the Lord, the Spirit who goes forth, the embrace...”. That is all okay. The Document? The Document is debateable. And there is something else to add: Ukraine is in a time of war, of suffering, with so many interpretations. I have often mentioned the Ukrainian people, calling for prayers and closeness, both at the Angelus and at the Wednesday Audiences. But the historical fact of war... everyone has his own ideas: What is this war about? Who started it? How is it being waged? It is obvious that this has been an historical problem but also and existential problem of that country, and it speaks of suffering. In this context, I insert this paragraph, and what the faithful are saying is understandable. Because Svjatoslav says: “So many faithful have called or written to me saying that they are deeply disappointed and feel betrayed by Rome”. It is understandable that people in that situation feel this way. The Document is debatable on the issue of Ukraine, but it does say to stop the conflict and to move toward agreements; I too, personally, hoped that the Minsk Agreements would move forward, and that the “elbow would not erase what hands had written”. The Church of Rome, the Pope, has always said: “Seek peace”. I have received both Presidents. And for this reason, when he says that he has heard this from his people, I understand him, I understand him. But it is not “the” story. The story is the whole thing. If you read the whole interview, you see that there are serious dogmatic matters, which remain, and there is a desire for ecumenical unity, to move forward — he is an ecumenical man. There are several opinions. He wrote to me, when he learned of the journey, of the meeting, but as a brother, offering his fraternal opinions. I am not displeased with the Document, as it is; not displeased in the sense that we must respect the things that each one has the freedom to think, in such a difficult situation. And from Rome... Now the

Nuncio on the border where they are fighting, helping the soldiers, the wounded; the Church of Rome has sent a lot of help there, a lot of aid there. But again the quest for peace, agreement, that the Minsk Agreement be respected. This is the big picture. But we shouldn't be frightened by that phrase: this is a lesson, that a story has to be interpreted with the hermeneutics of the whole, not of the part.

The French journalist then asked again if there had been an invitation to Moscow from Patriarch Kirill.

Patriarch Kirill.... I would rather... if I say one thing about it I will have to say another and another and another. What we talked about alone.... I would prefer to limit myself to what we said in public. This is a given. Were I to say one thing, I would say another... no! What I said in public, what he said in public, this is what can be said about a private meeting. Otherwise it would not be private. But I can say this about it: I left happy. And so did he.

Carlo Marroni of 'Sole 24 Ore' referred to discussion in the Italian Parliament of legalizing civil unions, which also regards adoption and children's rights.

First of all, I do not know what's happening in the Italian Parliament. The Pope does not interfere with Italian politics. In the first meeting that I had with [Italian] Bishops in May 2013, one of the three things I said: "With the Italian government: sort it out for yourselves". Because the Pope is for everyone, and he cannot engage in the practical, domestic politics of one country. This is not the Pope's role. What I think is what the Church thinks and I have said this on many occasions. This is not the first country to have this experience: there are many. I think what the Church has always said.

Spanish journalist Paloma García Ovejero of COPE expressed concern over the Zika virus, which seems to be particularly dangerous for the unborn, such that some authorities have suggested abortion. She asked the Pontiff if the Church would consider it as a "lesser evil".

Abortion is not a "lesser evil". It is a crime. It is wiping out one to save another. That is what the mafia does. It is a crime, it is absolutely evil. Regarding a "lesser evil": preventing pregnancy is one thing — we are speaking in terms of the conflict between the 5th and 6th Commandments. The great Paul VI, in a difficult situation in Africa, allowed nuns to use a form of artificial contraception amid the violence. It is important not to confuse the evil of preventing pregnancy, in itself, with abortion. Abortion is not a theological issue: it is a human issue, it is a medical issue. One person is killed in order to save another — in the best case scenario — or in order to live comfortably. It is against the Hippocratic Oath that physicians take. It is an evil in and of itself. It is not a "religious" evil, to start with, no, it is a human evil. Evidently, as it is a human evil — like all killing — it is condemned. On the other hand, preventing pregnancy is not an absolute evil, and in certain cases, such as the one I mentioned of Bl. Paul VI, it was clear. Moreover, I would exhort

the doctors to do everything possible to find vaccines against this disease which is carried by two mosquitos: this has to be elaborated. Thank you.

The question of German reporter Ludwig Ring-Eifel of 'Katholische-Nachrichten-Agentur' (KNA) was motivated by the fact that in a few weeks Francis, like John Paul II before him, will receive the Charlemagne Prize, one of the European community's most prestigious awards. This at a time when European unity seems to be breaking into pieces, first with the crisis of the euro and now with that of refugees.

First, regarding the Charlemagne Prize. It is my practice not to accept honours or degrees; I have always done this, not out of humility but because I don't enjoy these things. A little variation from the norm is good sometimes, but I don't enjoy it. In this case, I was — I won't say "forced" but — "convinced" by the holy and theological persistence of Cardinal Kasper, who was chosen by Aachen to convince me! I said: "Yes, but in the Vatican". I said this; and I offer it up for Europe: that it may be a shared commendation, an award so that Europe can do what I wished for in Strasbourg: that it be not "Grandmother Europe" but "Mother Europe". Second. The other day, reading the news about these crises, I read little, I only glance through one newspaper (I won't say the name so as not to incite jealousy, but you know), I skim for about 15 minutes, and then I have the Secretariat of State inform me — one word that I liked, I liked it — I don't know who approves of it and who doesn't — is "the reestablishment of the European Union". I thought of the great Fathers. But today, where is there a Schuman, an Adenauer? These were great men who after the war founded the European Union. And I like this notion of reestablishment: if only it could be done! I wouldn't call it the only one, but Europe has a strength, a culture, a history that must not be wasted, and we have to do everything possible so that the European Union may have the strength and also the inspiration to make us move forward. I don't know. This is what I think.

Anne Thompson of NBC News asked how a Church that claims to be "merciful" can sooner forgive a murderer than those who divorce and remarry.

I like this question! Two Synod Assemblies spoke about the family and the Pope spoke about it all year in the Wednesday catecheses. It is a real question, I like it, you formed it well. In the Post-Synodal Document that will be coming out — perhaps before Easter — one of the chapters — because there are many — will summarize all that the Synod said about conflicted or wounded families, and the pastoral care of wounded families. This is one of the concerns. Another is marriage preparation. Consider that in order to become a priest there are eight years of study, of preparation, and then, after a certain amount of time, if you cannot do it, you ask for a dispensation and you leave, and that's okay. Yet, for a Sacrament that lasts your entire life, just three or four meetings.... Preparation for marriage is very, very important; I think it is something that the Church, in regular pastoral care — at least in my country, in South America — doesn't appreciate enough. For example — not so much now, but several years ago — in my country there was the tendency to ... it was called a "shotgun wedding": getting married hastily because a

baby was on the way, in order to protect the family's honour in society. There, they were not free to decide, and very often these marriages were null. As Bishop, I forbade priests from doing this in these cases. Should a baby come, they ought to continue in their relationship and when they feel ready to make it lifelong, then they should go ahead. But there is a flaw [in the preparation] for marriage. Then, another very interesting point: the upbringing of children. It is the children who are the victims of problems in the family. But these family problems, of which they are the victims, neither the husband nor wife want: for example, the need to work. When dad does not have free time to speak with his kids, when mom does not have free time to speak with her kids. When I hear the confession of a couple, spouses who have children, I ask: "How many children do you have?". Some get scared, they say: "The priest is going to ask me why I don't have more...". And I say: "I'll ask you a second question: do you play with your children?"; and most — almost all — say: "Father, I don't have time: I work all day". The children are victims of a problem in society that wounds the family. It is a problem. I like your question.

A third interesting thing, in the meeting with families in Tuxtla, there was a remarried couple, in their second union, who were integrated in the pastoral care of the Church; and the key word that the Synod used — and I will refer back to it — is to "integrate" wounded families, families with remarried spouses, and all this, into the life of the Church. But do not forget the children at the centre! They are the primary victims, both of the wounds and of the conditions of poverty, of work, of all this.

Ms Thompson then followed up, asking whether this means that they will be allowed to receive communion.

This is something... this is where it hits home. Being integrated into the Church does not mean "taking communion". I know remarried Catholics who go to Church once or twice a year: "I want to receive communion!", as if communion were a commendation. It is a matter of integration... the doors are all open. But one cannot just say: from now on "they can take communion". This would also wound the spouses, the couple, because it won't help them on the path to integration. These two were happy! They used a really lovely expression: "We do not take eucharistic communion, but we do find communion by visiting people in the hospital, in this or that service...". Their integration is there. If there is something more, the Lord will tell them, but ... it is a journey, it is a path....

Antoine-Marie Izoard of iMedia brought up the interest sparked by the correspondence between John Paul II and American philosopher Anna Tymieniecka. He asked whether a Pope could have such a close relationship with a woman.

I heard about this, this friendship between St John Paul II and this philosopher, when I was in Buenos Aires: it was a known fact, her books, too, were known, and John Paul II was a restless man. Then, I would say that a man who doesn't know how to have a good friendship with a woman

— I am not talking about misogynists, they are sick — is a man who is missing something. I, too, in my personal experience, when I seek advice, I ask a colleague, a friend, a man, but I also like to hear a woman's opinion. They give you such wealth! They look at things in another way. I like to say that a woman is one who builds life in the womb, and has — this is a comparison I make — the charism of giving you things that help you build. Friendship with a woman is not a sin, friendship. An amorous relationship with a woman who is not your wife is a sin. The Pope is a man, the Pope also needs to hear the thoughts of women. The Pope, too, has a heart that can have a healthy, holy friendship with a woman. There have been many holy friendships: Francis and Clare, Teresa and John of the Cross.... But women are still rather ... not well thought of, not completely.... We have not understood the good that a woman can do in the life of a priest and of the Church, in the sense of advice, of help, of healthy friendship. Thank you.

Franca Giansoldati of 'Il Messaggero' returned to the political debate in Italy regarding civil unions, mentioning the 2003 document of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, which expressly states that Catholics in Parliament cannot vote for these laws. She asked if this document still applies. She then spoke about another detente visible on the horizon after that with Moscow: namely, the meeting that the Pontiff would like to have with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and thus with Sunni Islam.

In this regard, Bishop Ayuso went to Cairo last week to meet the Deputy of the Grand Imam, and also to greet the Grand Imam. Bishop Ayuso is the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, presided by Cardinal Tauran. I would like to meet the Imam. I know he would like that too, and we are trying to find a way, again through Cardinal Tauran, because that is the way. We will work it out. Regarding the first topic: I don't remember very well the 2003 document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. But a Catholic in Parliament must vote according to his or her well-formed conscience: this, I would say only this. I think that is enough. I say "well-formed" because the conscience is not "whatever I think". I remember when same-sex marriage was voted on in Buenos Aires, there was a vote, and at the end one said to the other: "Do you see it clearly?" — "No" — "Me neither" — "Let's leave" — "If we go we won't reach a quorum". And the other said: "But if we reach a quorum, we'll give the vote to Kirchner!", and the other: "I would rather give the vote to Kirchner than to Bergoglio!", and so forth. This is not a well-formed conscience! And regarding people of the same sex, I repeat what I said on the return trip from Rio de Janeiro, and what is in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Javier Martínez Brocal of Rome Reports asked if the Pope will return to Argentina when he returns to Latin America, or if he will go to China.

China... I would so like to go there! I want to say something, something fair, about the Mexican people. They are a people of wealth, of such a great wealth, they are a people of surprises. They have a culture, a thousand-year-old culture. Do you know that today, in Mexico, including the indigenous, there are 65 languages spoken? Sixty-five! They are a people of great faith, having

also suffered religious persecution, there are martyrs. Now two or three will be canonized. They are such a people... it cannot be explained. It cannot be explained simply because the word "people" is not a logical category, it is a mystical category. One cannot explain the Mexican people, this wealth, this history, this joy, this capacity to celebrate, and these tragedies that you asked about. I cannot say anything other than that there is a kind of unity, and that this people has not failed, has not ceased despite many wars, and the things that are happening now.... There, in Ciudad Juárez, there was a pact: 12 hours of peace during my visit. Afterwards the fighting would continue, the trafficking.... A people like this whose vitality persists can only be explained by Guadalupe. I invite you to seriously study the event of Guadalupe. Our Lady is there. I find no other explanation. It would be beautiful if you, as journalists.... There are already a few good books that explain, explain the painting as well, what it is like, what it means.... This way one can somewhat understand this people, so great, so beautiful.

Caroline Pigozzi of 'Paris Match' asked the Pope what he asked of the Virgin of Guadalupe and, on a side note, whether he dreams in Italian or Spanish.

Yes, I'll say that I dream in Esperanto. I don't know how to answer this, really. Sometimes, yes, I remember some dreams in another language, but dreaming in languages, no, with figures, yes. My psychology is like this. I rarely dream in words. And the first question was?

Ms Pigozzi answered: about the Madonna.

I asked for the world, for peace. Many things. The poor thing ended up with [a lot on her mind] her head like this [he extends his arms above his head]. I asked forgiveness, I asked that the Church grow in health, I prayed on behalf of the Mexican people. And another thing I also asked wholeheartedly for was that priests be true priests, and nuns be true nuns, and bishops be true bishops: the way the Lord wants us to be. I asked this wholeheartedly. But other than that, the things a son says to his mother are somewhat secret. Thank you, Caroline.

At the end, Fr Lombardi wanted to honour Alberto Gasbarri on his last journey. The presentation of gifts was interrupted by a joke from the Pope.

Just one word: I also repeat what I said at the beginning: thank you very much! You have given me good advice. You have only one flaw: you aren't good at calculating kilometres!

After the cake, the Pope concluded.

Have a good trip. Thank you very much for your work, and pray for me. You know that I remain at your disposal. Play with your children!

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