The Holy See

Dear brothers and sisters,

On the occasion of the opening of your annual Synod, I wish to express to you my closeness and that of the Catholic Church. I greet you fraternally and with great cordiality, and I assure you of remembrance in prayer.

I keep alive the memory of our recent encounters in Turin and in Rome, as well as those in Argentina. I am grateful for the beautiful witness I have received, and for the many faces I cannot forget. I hope that these days of sharing and reflection, which take place during the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, will be inspired by the joy of placing oneself before the countenance of Christ: His gaze, that rests on us, is the source of our peace, because it makes us feel we are beloved children of the Father and enables us to see others, the world and history in a new way.

May the gaze of Jesus also enlighten our relationships, so that they are not simply formal and correct, but fraternal and lively. The Good Shepherd wants us to walk together, and His gaze already embraces all of us, His disciples whom He wishes to see fully united.

Walking towards full unity, with an outlook of hope that recognizes that the presence of God is stronger than evil, is so important. It is especially so today, in a world marked by violence and fear, by lacerations and indifference, where the selfishness of affirming oneself at the expense of others obscures the simple beauty of welcoming, sharing and loving. But our Christian witness cannot give in to the logic of the world: together let us help each other to choose and to live the logic of Christ!

With fraternal affection I thank you and I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me and for all of us, your brothers and sisters.

From the Vatican, 10 August 2017

FRANCIS

Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 21 August 2017