



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL LLUÍS MARTÍNEZ SISTACH, ARCHBISHOP OF BARCELONA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PASTORAL CONGRESS ON THE WORLD'S
BIG CITIES**

[BARCELONA, 25-26 NOVEMBER 2014][Multimedia]

Dear Brother,

I greet you with affection as the final events of the International Pastoral Congress on the World's Big Cities are underway in Barcelona. I also greet the organizers and participants in the various stages of the Congress.

I am pleased to learn of the efforts that have been made, and I encourage all to continue to reflect creatively on the way to contend with the task of evangelizing in the great urban centres, which are ever expanding and in which everyone needs to feel the closeness and mercy of God, who does not abandon them. God always allows himself to be found, taking the initiative to offer a sense of true life to those who are alone, confused or pained due to the wounds often inflicted by a chaotic and unsupportive society.

The Church has the mission of ensuring that the Good News of Jesus Christ and His saving love reaches different environments, without fear of pluralism, and without any form of discrimination. She does not consider it a loss to go out to the peripheries or to change the usual preconceptions when necessary. Like a mother, whose primary concern is the wellbeing of her children, sparing no effort or sacrifice: may she ensure they never lack the light of the Gospel in order to lead a life of abundant hope, joy and peace; that they never lack acceptance to feel integrated within a community, whether in circumstances of disintegration or cold anonymity; that there may grow within them the spirit of authentic solidarity with all, especially with those most in need.

I ask the Lord that the work of this Congress may enlighten the pastoral activity at the current pastoral activity, and from my heart, I bless the Congress participants and those taking part in the solemn ceremony which is, on this occasion, taking place in the emblematic temple of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona.

I ask you to pray and I seek prayers for me and for the fruits of my service to the Church. May Jesus bless you and may the Holy Virgin protect you.

Fraternally,

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