



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW HEALTHCARE CENTRE
OF THE BAMBINO GESÙ HOSPITAL IN BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

[Multimedia]

Dear Friends of the Bangui Paediatric Hospital,

I greet all of you with joy on this festive occasion of the inauguration of the new healthcare structure dedicated precisely to the children of the Central African Republic. This site was developed with the support of ‘Bambino Gesù’ Paediatric Hospital, committed since the spring of 2016 to the formation of medical personnel, and more. I hope that it may become a centre of excellence, where children may find responses to and relief from their suffering, with tenderness and love. I do not forget! I hold in my heart the suffering eyes of the many malnourished children whom I met during my brief visit to the hospital on the occasion of [my journey to your country](#).

And I still recall the words of the doctor who was beside me: “Most of these children will die because they have resistant malaria, and are malnourished”. I heard it myself. No, this must no longer happen! Children’s suffering is without a doubt the hardest to accept. The great Dostoyevsky posed the question: “Why do children suffer?”. So often, I ask myself the same thing: why do children suffer? And I find no explanation. I simply look to the Crucifix and invoke the Father’s merciful love for so much suffering.

This structure which is being inaugurated today is a tangible sign of mercy, which originated in the Holy Year that I wished to open in advance — [on 29 November 2015](#) — precisely in Bangui. The first cathedral door to be opened was Bangui’s, not Saint Peter’s. It was a gesture the Lord had inspired. Passing through the Holy Door of the Cathedral, I affirmed: “Bangui now becomes the spiritual capital of prayer for the Father’s mercy. Let us all implore peace, mercy, reconciliation, forgiveness and love”. I like to think that Holy Door is still open and that the river of mercy gives lifeblood to this Paediatric Hospital and to all those who will work there. May you always remember: “many concrete acts of goodness and tenderness are shown to the weak and the

vulnerable, to those most lonely and abandoned. There are true champions of charity who show constant solidarity with the poor and the unhappy” (Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 17).

Thus I encourage all of you to carry out your work of caring for children, inspired by charity, always thinking of the “good Samaritan” of the Gospel: may you be attentive to the needs of your little patients, may you tenderly bend down to their frailty, and may you be able to see the Lord in them. This Hospital reminds all of us that what we are living “is the time of mercy because those who are weak and vulnerable, distant and alone, ought to feel the presence of brothers and sisters who can help them in their need” (*ibid.*, 21).

Dear brothers and sisters, in practicing your medical profession, may you be artisans of mercy!

I address a deferential greeting to President Faustin-Archange Touadéra. I also greet the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr Santiago De Wit Guzmán and the President of Bambino Gesù Hospital, Ms Mariella Enoc, who worked so hard on this construction project. And a greeting goes to Cardinal Konrad [Krajewski], who renders the Pope’s charity present in the world. Those who take care of the little ones are on God’s side. Do not forget: those who take care of the little ones are on God’s side and overcome the throw-away culture! May this new Hospital become a model and reference point for the entire country. Remember: in the sick there is Christ, and in the love of those who bend down to His wounds lies the way to encounter Him!

I bless you! And please, do not forget to pray for me! Thank you.