



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER ON THE OCCASION OF THE SLOVAKIAN NATIONAL JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE

[4 April 2025]

*Dear brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear priests, men and women religious,
Dear sisters, dear brothers in the Lord!*

I would very much have liked to be present with you to share this moment of faith and communion, but I am still in convalescence and so I will join you through prayer and with all my affection.

I welcome you all, here in Rome for the national pilgrimage during this Jubilee year. I greet His Excellency Archbishop Bernard Bober, president of the Episcopal Conference, bishops, priests, consecrated men and women and lay faithful. A warm greeting goes to the civil authorities: in particular, I am pleased to address Mr. President Peter Pellegrini.

Your pilgrimage is a concrete sign of the desire to renew faith, to strengthen the bond with the Successor of Peter and to bear witness joyfully to the hope that does not disappoint (cf. *Rm* 5:5), because it is born of the love that sprang from the pierced Heart of Christ and poured into us by the Holy Spirit. From this hope, this Jubilee calls us to become pilgrims in all our life, and the journey to Rome, with the passage through the Holy Doors and the visits to the tombs of the Apostles and the Martyrs, is the pledge of this journey every day, reaching towards eternity. For you, Slovak sisters and brothers, it is an itinerary that is part of the rich Christian tradition of your land, made fruitful by the witness of Saints Cyril and Methodius and many other saints, who have irrigated it with the Gospel of Christ for more than a thousand years.

Faith, dear friends, is a treasure to be shared with joy. Every time brings with it challenges and hardships, but also opportunities to grow in confidence and in abandonment to God. And like the Virgin Mary, who with her humble and courageous “yes” opened the door to the redemption of the

world, also our “yes”, simple and sincere, can become a tool in the hands of God to achieve something great. To welcome His plan does not mean having all the answers, but trusting that, wherever He leads us, He precedes us also with His grace. To say “yes” today can allow us to open up new horizons of faith, hope and peace, for us and those whom the Lord makes us encounter. With a synodal style, listen to what the Spirit is saying to your Churches, without fearing the new but discerning in it the initiative of God, who always surprises us.

Sisters and brothers, continue to walk together, pastors and faithful, keeping your eyes on Jesus, our salvation. May the Virgin Mary, Patroness of Slovakia, whom you venerate in particular as Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, and who, precisely because of her union with the passion of her Son, is Mother of Hope, guide and protect you. I cordially bless all of you, your families and your people. Do not forget to pray for me.

From the Vatican, 27 March 2025

FRANCIS

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