



The Holy See

MEETING OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE HOLY FATHER AND THE SYNOD FATHERS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Paul VI Audience Hall

Saturday, 6 October 2018

[Multimedia]

Here are the written questions.... The responses will be given by the Synod Fathers. Because if I were to give answers here, I would nullify the Synod! The responses must come from everyone, from our reflection, from our discussion and, above all, they must be responses made without fear.

I will limit myself — with respect to all these questions — to just saying something that might be helpful, a few principles.

To you, young people, who have spoken, who have given your testimony, who have taken a path, I say: this is the first response. Take your path. Be young people on the move, who look to the horizons, not in the mirror. Always looking forward, on the move, and not sitting on the couch. Many times I have thought to say this: a young person, a boy, a girl, who is on the couch, ends up retired at 24: this is terrible! And then, you said it well: that what helps me find myself is not the mirror, looking at my appearance. Finding myself is in doing, in going in search of good, of truth, of beauty. There I will find myself.

Then, on this path, another word that struck me is the last one. That last word was powerful, but it is true.... Who said it? You. It was powerful: coherence. Coherence in life. I am on a journey, but with coherence in life. And when you see an incoherent Church, a Church that reads you the Beatitudes and then falls into the most princely and scandalous clericalism, I understand, I understand.... If you are Christian, take the Beatitudes and put them into practice. And if you are a man or a woman who has given your life, consecrated it; if you are a priest — even a dancing priest [referring to a testimony] —, if you are a priest and want to live as a Christian, follow the

path of the Beatitudes. Not the way of worldliness, the way of clericalism, which is one of the most awful perversions of the Church. Coherence in life. But you, too [addressing the young people], must be coherent on your path and ask yourselves: “Am I coherent in my life?”. This is a second principle. This is a second principle.

Then there is the problem of inequalities. We lose the true sense of power — this applies to the question about politics — we lose what Jesus told us, that power is service: true power is serving. Otherwise it is selfishness; it is humiliating the other, not allowing him to grow. It is controlling, making slaves, not mature people. Power is for helping people grow, for making ourselves servants of the people. This is the principle: regarding both politics and coherence in your questions.

Then, other questions.... I will tell you something. Please, you young people, boys and girls, you are priceless! You are not a commodity at auction! Please do not let yourselves be bought; do not let yourselves be seduced; do not let yourselves be enslaved by the ideological colonizations that put ideas in our heads and in the end we become slaves, dependent, failures in life. You are priceless. You must always repeat this to yourselves: I am not at auction, I am priceless. I am free, I am free! Fall in love with this freedom, which is what Jesus offers.

Then there are two things — and I would like to end with this — among the ideas that you have said and to which the Synod Fathers will respond in dialogue with your questions. The first is on the use of the web. It is true: the digital interconnection is immediate, it is effective, it is rapid. But if you get used to this, you will end up — and what I am about to say is real — you will end up like a family where, at the table, at lunch or dinner, everyone is on their mobile phone and talks with other people, or communicates with each other by mobile phone, without a concrete, actual relationship, lacking concreteness. To be reliable, every path you take must be concrete, like the experiences, so many experiences that you have mentioned here. None of the testimonies that you have given today were ‘liquid’: all were concrete. Concreteness. Concreteness is the guarantee for moving forward. If the media, if the use of the web leads you away from concreteness, makes you ‘liquid’, cut it out. Cut it out. Because if there is no concreteness there will be no future for you. This is certain; it is a rule of the road and of the journey.

And then, this concreteness also in welcoming. So many of your examples, which you have given today, are about welcoming. Michel asked this question: “How can we overcome the increasingly widespread mentality that sees in the foreigner, in the different, in the migrant, a danger, a harm, an enemy to be chased away?”. This is the mentality of exploiting people, of making slaves of the weakest. It is about closing not only doors, but also closing hands. And today populism — which has nothing to do with what is popular — is somewhat in fashion. Popular is the culture of the people, the culture of each of your peoples which is expressed in art; it is expressed in culture; it is expressed in the science of the people; it is expressed in celebration! Every people celebrates in their own way. This is popular. But populism is the opposite: it is being closed to this based on a

model. We are closed, there is only us. And when we are closed we cannot move forward. Be careful. It is the mentality that Michel spoke of: “How can we overcome the increasingly widespread mentality that sees in the foreigner, in the different, in the migrant a danger, a harm, a danger to be chased away?”. It is overcome with an embrace, by welcoming, with dialogue, with love which is the word that opens all doors.

And in the end — I spoke of concreteness — each of you wants to take the concrete path in life, a path that bears fruit. Thank you [Giovanni Caccamo] for the photo with your grandfather: that photograph was perhaps this evening’s most beautiful message. Speak with the elderly, talk to grandparents: they are the roots, the roots of your concreteness, the roots of your growing, blossoming and bearing fruit. Remember: if the tree is by itself, it will not bear fruit. All that blossoms on the tree comes from what is underground. This expression is from a poet, it is not mine. But it is the truth. Stick to the roots, but do not remain there. Take the roots and bring them forth to bear fruit, and you too will become roots for others. Do not forget about the photograph, the one with grandfather. Talk to your grandparents; talk to the elderly and this will make you happy.

Thank you very much! These are guidelines. The responses are up to them! [indicating the Synod Fathers]. Thank you, thank you!