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Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Francis in Portugal on the occasion of the 37th World Youth Day (2 to 6 August 2023) – Vigil with young people at Parque Tejo

Private meeting with members of the Society of Jesus at the *Colégio de S. João de Brito*

Vigil with young people at *Parque Tejo*

Private meeting with members of the Society of Jesus at the *Colégio de S. João de Brito*

In the afternoon, the Holy Father Francis left the Apostolic Nunciature and transferred by car to the *Colégio de S. João de Brito*, where he met privately with members of the Society of Jesus present in Portugal. He then returned by car to the Apostolic Nunciature, where he dined in private. The Pope then transferred by car to *Parque Tejo* for the vigil with young people.

Vigil with young people at *Parque Tejo*

This evening, at 20.15 (21.15 in Rome), the Holy Father Francis arrived at *Parque Tejo* for the vigil with young people. After several tours among the crowd by popemobile, at 20.45 (21.45 in Rome), the vigil commenced. After a hymn and a moment of prayer through art in three moments, the Encounter, Arising and Departing, the Pope delivered his address.

At the end, after the Exposition of the Most Holy Eucharist, some songs and the final blessing with the Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Father returned by car to the Apostolic Nunciature in Lisbon. According to the local authorities, some 1.5 million people were present at the Parque Tejo the Vigil.

The following is the address delivered by Pope Francis gave during the vigil with young people:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good evening!

It gives me much joy to see all of you! Thank you for having made the pilgrimage to be here! I think of the Virgin Mary, who also travelled, in order to visit Elizabeth: "Mary set out and went with haste" (*Lk* 1:39). We might ask, why did Mary set out and go with haste to visit her cousin? Certainly, Mary had just learned that Elizabeth was pregnant, but so was she; so why go, if no one had asked her to? Mary does something that was not asked of her, and that she did not have to do. Mary goes because she loved, and "whoever loves flies, runs and rejoices" (*The Imitation of Christ*, III, 5). That is what love does to us.

Mary's joy is twofold: she had just received the angel's message that she would welcome the Redeemer of the world, and she was also given the news that her cousin was pregnant. This is interesting: instead of thinking about herself, she thinks of the other. Why? Because joy is missionary, joy is not just for one person, it is for sharing something with others. Let me ask you: those of you here, who have come to meet others, to find Christ's message, to find life's beautiful meaning, will you keep all this for yourselves or will you share it with others? What do you think? Surely it is for sharing with others, because joy is missionary! Let us all repeat that, together: joy is missionary! And so we share this joy with others.

Yet, this joy we have, others have helped us to receive it. Let us look back, then, at all we have received, for it has prepared our hearts for joy. Each of us, if we cast our minds back, can recall those who have been rays of light in our lives: parents, grandparents, friends, priests, religious men and women, catechists, youth leaders, teachers, and so on. They are the "roots" of our joy. Let each of us now spend a few moments in silence to think of those who have given us something in life, who are like the roots of our joy...

Did faces and stories come to mind? The joy that has come to us, thanks to these roots, is what we in turn ought to share, because we have *roots of joy*. In the same way, we too can be roots of joy for others. It is not about bringing a fleeting joy, the joy of the moment; it is about bringing a joy that generates roots. Let us ask, how can we become roots of joy?

Joy is not to be found in a locked library, even though study is necessary! Joy lies somewhere else. It is not kept under lock and key, but must be sought, must be discovered. It has to be found in dialogue with others, where we share these roots of joy that we have received. And this, at times, is tiring. Let me ask you a question: do you sometimes get tired? Think about what happens when we become tired: we have no wish to do anything; we throw in the towel (as we say in Spanish), because we have no desire to carry on and we give up, stop walking and fall. Do you believe that those who fall in life, who have experienced failure, who even commit serious or grave mistakes, that their lives are over? No! So what are they to do? They are to get back up! Now there is something very profound that I would like you to take away with you and remember: those who come from the Alps, who like to climb mountains, have a very beautiful song that goes like this: "In the art of climbing the mountain, what matters isn't *not* to fall, but not to *remain* fallen". This is beautiful!

Those who remain fallen have already withdrawn from life, have shut down, closed off from hope and desire, and remain on the ground. And when we see any friends of ours who have fallen, what are we to do? *Lift them up*. When we need to lift someone up, or help them, do you notice *how* we are to do it? We look down on them. That is the only time, *the only time* that we are allowed to look down upon others, when we are offering to help them up. Yet, we often see people looking down on us, or over our shoulder, from above! How sad. Instead, the only way, the only situation in which it is permissible to look down on others is... well, you tell me, out loud: *to help them up*.

That, then, is something like how life's journey proceeds, how we are to keep moving forwards. In life, in order to accomplish things, we have to train ourselves to journey on. Sometimes, we do not feel like carrying on, we do not feel like making the effort; we copy in exams because we do not feel like studying or we did not get the

results we wanted. I am not sure if any of you like football... I do! Think of how much training is needed in order to score a goal; how much effort is required to achieve a certain result. In life, too, we cannot always do what we want, but we must do what leads us to respond to the vocation we sense deep within us – and everyone has their own vocation. Keep on walking. And if we fall, we get back up, or someone will help us get back up; let us not remain fallen; and let us train ourselves, train in order keep moving forward. All this is possible, not because we take a course on walking – there are no courses that can teach us how to journey in life – instead we learn, we learn from our parents, our grandparents, we learn from friends, giving each other a helping hand. We learn about life, and that trains us in how to journey onwards.

I leave you with these thoughts. Carry on; if you fall, get back up; walk with a goal in mind, and train each day of your lives. Nothing is free in life, everything has to be paid for. Only one thing is free: the love of Jesus! So, with this free gift that we have – the love of Jesus – and with the desire to carry on the journey, let us walk in hope, let us be mindful of our roots, and move forwards, *without fear*. Do not be afraid. Thank you!
