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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) – Meeting with World Youth Day volunteers at the Passeio marítimo de Algés

Meeting with World Youth Day volunteers at the *Passeio marítimo de Algés*

In the afternoon, after taking leave of the staff and benefactors of the Apostolic Nunciature of Lisbon, the Holy Father Francis transferred by car to the *Passeio marítimo de Algés* to meet the World Youth Day volunteers.

On arrival, the Pope was received by the Patriarch of Lisbon, who accompanied him in the popemobile for a tour among the volunteers.

At 16.30 (17.30 in Rome), the meeting with the World Youth Day volunteers took place. After the screening of a video on World Youth Day, three volunteers offered their testimonies. Then, introduced by some words of thanks from the Patriarch of Lisbon, His Eminence Cardinal Manuel Clemente, Pope Francis delivered his address.

At the end, after the missionary gesture of the volunteers, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the final blessing, the Holy Father transferred by car to Figo Maduro Air Base for the farewell ceremony at the end of his journey in Portugal.

The following is the address delivered by the Pope during his meeting with volunteers:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear friends, good afternoon! And thank you!

I am grateful to the Patriarch of Lisbon for his words, and to Bishop Aguiar and all of you for having worked so hard and so well: you have made these unforgettable days possible! You have laboured for months, quietly, without fuss, not seeking the limelight, so that we could all be here to sing together: "Jesus lives and does not

leave us alone: we will never stop loving”. Not only that; you have been a good example, because you worked together as a team! Yet your efforts have been more than work, they were a *service*, thank you!

It was the same service that the Virgin Mary, who “set out and went with haste” (*Lk 1:39*) offered to her cousin Elizabeth, for she felt the need to share her joy in serving – to share joy and service, joy in serving. Let us think of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree to see Jesus and then hurried down. Something touched him. He wanted to meet Jesus and welcome him into his home (cf. *Lk 19:6*). Let us think of the women and disciples, who on Easter morning ran to the tomb and back to the Upper Room to announce that Christ is risen (cf. *Jn 20:1-18*). Those who love do not stand idly by, but serve others. Those who love hasten to serve, hasten to dedicate themselves to the service of others. And you ran a great deal in these past months. I was only able to see it in the final moments, in these past few days, while you met a thousand needs, your faces marked at times by fatigue. At other times, you were somewhat overwhelmed by the pressures of the moment, but I observed one thing: your eyes shone brightly because of the joy you had in serving others. Thank you!

You made this World Youth Day possible. You did great things with the smallest of gestures, such as offering a bottle of water to a stranger, which creates friendship. You have done much running about, yet never in a frenetic or aimless way that can sometimes characterize our world. No, you ran in a different way. You ran to meet others in order to serve them in the name of Jesus. You came to Lisbon in order to serve and not to be served. Thank you very much!

And now I would like to be a kind of “amplifier” for you, so that what you have told us in your wonderful testimonies may be heard clearly. Chiara, Francisco and Filipe: all three spoke to us of a special encounter with Jesus. They reminded us that meeting Christ is the most important encounter, the one that drives every other, that moves life forward. It is the most important encounter in our lives. Renewing our personal encounter with Jesus each day is the heart of Christian living. We need to do it each day so that it remains fresh, not only in our mind but also in our heart. We experienced that a simple “yes” to Jesus can change our lives. Yet a “yes” said to others also does much good when I am ready to serve. Even when tired, you took courage and moved forward by saying “yes” to serving others. Thank you for this!

Francisco, you told us that here you found something you needed, even though you did not know you were looking for it. As you walked, worked and prayed with others, you realized that you could not let yourself be imprisoned by the mess, the “unmade beds” of the past, nor live with a feeling of being unfulfilled. Instead, with the help of Jesus and your brothers and sisters, you were given the opportunity to tidy “the room of life”. This gathering helps a great deal to put our lives in order. Why? Is it the gathering itself? No, it is thanks to Jesus, who is in our midst and shows himself to us. We do not need things, distractions or money to put our lives in order. We need to *enlarge our heart*. And if you enlarge your hearts, your lives will be put in order. Do not be afraid to enlarge your hearts!

Finally, Filipe, among the many fine thoughts you shared, you said something that I want to emphasize: that you experienced a double encounter here, in meeting both Jesus and others. This is important. The encounter with Jesus is a personal and unique moment, which can only be described and recounted up to a certain point, but it always comes through a journey made with others, made through the intercession of others. To encounter Jesus and to encounter him through service to others.

Friends, in closing I want to leave you with an image. As many of you know, to the north of Lisbon is a place, Nazaré, where it is possible to see waves of up to thirty metres high, which attract surfers from all over the world. In these days, you also have faced a real wave: not of water, but of young people – like you, who have poured into this city. Yet with God’s help, with great generosity and mutual support, you have ridden this great wave. You are really courageous! Thank you! I want to tell you: carry on, keep riding the waves of love, of charity. Be “surfers” of love! This is the task that I entrust to you: that the service you offered for World Youth Day be the first of many waves of goodness. Each time, you will be carried higher, closer to God, and this will let you see your path from a better vantage point.

Once again, thank you to everyone. Have a great journey! And, please, continue to pray for me! Thank you!