



The Holy See

CHILDREN'S COURTYARD

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER

San Damaso Courtyard

Saturday, 4 June 2022

[Multimedia]

Boy: Pope Francis, I am Mattia Mordente, and I would like to ask you a question. I know you have visited many countries abroad, especially poor countries, to speak with Heads of State and also to pray for those countries, to improve them. In your opinion, which of the countries you have visited has improved the most thanks to you?

Pope Francis: I'll tell you something: every country has its own peculiarities, and I wonder what is the richest peculiarity of a country. And do you know what the richest peculiarity of a country is? The people. People are always people: they are the same up to a certain point, but each person is different, distinct, and has his or her own richness, and the thing that impresses me is to see how different populations are rich, with a special wealth for that country. Here too: each one of you has his or her own richness, the richness of your soul. Because the heart of each one of us, the soul of each one of us is not the same as another! There are no equal hearts, equal souls, each of us has our own wealth. And this also applies to countries. In the countries I visit, I have always seen special riches: this in a certain way, this in another.... It is the beauty of creation. And we have to see it in each one of us. If we learn to see people with the heart, to look with the heart, to feel with the heart, to think with the heart, we will find this richness in each person, which is different from all others, always beautiful and different. Do you understand?

Boy: Ok, yes.

Pope Francis: You're good, aren't you!

Boy: I am Edgar Murario, child and twin brother of a child also present here. I don't have many things to say to you but I have just one question to ask you: how does it feel to be Pope?

Pope Francis: The important thing, in whatever profession life puts you in, is that you don't stop being *yourself*, with your own personality. If a person, in order to start a job or if life has placed him in that role, changes his personality, he becomes an artificial person, and he loses himself in this. One must always feel things as they come, with authenticity: never, never disguise feelings. So, how do I feel as Pope? Like a person, like each one of you in your own profession, in your own job. Because I too am a person like you, and if I have this role then I must try to fulfil it in the humblest way and more in accordance with my personality, without trying to do things that are foreign to who I am. For example, I ask you: "How do you feel, or your twin brother? How do you feel?" — "I feel like this". It is important not to lose this. Even when a person grows up and finds himself with this role, with this job or another, do not forget that you are *this* person, and do not lose this feeling.

In response to your question: how do I feel with this office, with this service as Pope? I try to be myself, not to take artificial positions. I don't know if this is useful to you.

Boy: Ok, thank you.

Girl: Good morning, Holy Father. My name is Nicole Malizia, and I have a question to ask you. I would like to know: which responsibilities do you feel you have in being the Pope, or in any case the most important person in the world?

Pope Francis: This feeling of being responsible is something we should all have, every one of us. Each one of us has his or her own personality and also his or her responsibility. You, now, study, you have the responsibility of studying, of being a student; you also have the responsibility of bringing certain things to the family. If we think that each one of us has his or her own responsibility, we are thinking that our life is not for ourselves but for others, and also for service to others, to be close to others. I now get to your question: how do I feel? It is true that it is rather a heavy responsibility at times, because it frightens you. But I try to feel it in the most natural way, because if the Lord has asked this of me, it is because he will give me the strength not to make mistakes, to be careful not to make mistakes. I feel my responsibility as a service, just as you will feel yours as a service to others, to your family, and when you get married, to your family, to everyone. Service: the responsibility of serving others, of being of help to others; *not being above others* like a person who gives orders, no, no. Like one of the others and if one is in charge of the office, they do it like one of us. Do you understand?

Girl: Yes, thank you very much.

Pope Francis: Thank you.

Girl: Good morning. I am Caterina Lastorza. I would like to ask you: is it tiring to be Pope?

Pope Francis: In life, there are always moments of fatigue. Every profession, every job we take on always has a part of effort. We struggle to study, for example, we struggle to hold this office, that one, that other one, that service.... And even the Pope has his own labours, doesn't he? The road to bearing labours should be a normal road, like that of every person: each one of us bears his or her own labours, and carries out these labours in a human way, in a normal way. But if you ask me: is it much more tiresome than the work of a father or a mother? No, no. God gives the strength to each one of us to bear our own labours, and it is not something *more*. But it must be done honestly, sincerely and with work, just as dad and mum carry out their job as dad and mum. Do you understand?

Girl: Yes, many thanks.

Boy: Hello, My name is David Murario and I have just one thing to ask you. How do you feel being so closely in contact with the Creator of the Earth, that is, with God?

Pope Francis: This is a beautiful question, you know? Because in life there is the danger of forgetting God, and not being in contact. "No, but I get by on my own and get things done..." Eh, this road is dangerous! Always, once or twice a day, we must remember that the Lord is with us, that the Lord accompanies us, that the Lord is watching us. And to feel you are being watched over by the Lord is important for going ahead and doing your own work with sincerity and strength. The Lord watches over you too, he watches you and he watches your brother. The Lord is close to every one of us and he watches us, and with this *feeling of the Lord close by* we can go forth well. But the bad thing is when we do not want to feel the Lord close to us, and our preference is to feel this, this, or that, and we distance the Lord. The secret is feeling that the Lord is near. And this accompanies you all your life.

Boy: Ok, thank you. And I wanted to ask you another thing. When you see children with problems, sensory disabilities, how do you feel? Do you go and help them and give them advice, or do you go along your own way?

Pope Francis: When we look at a person, we must never feel we are superior to that person. For example, if I look at you and I think of what advice I can give you, this is not good. First, I must listen to you, first I must hear you and then say what comes from the heart. I looked at you, close to your brother, your twin; I looked at you and saw how you moved there and I thought, "That boy is good. What advice should I give to a good boy? "Be humble and thank God that he has given you this strength and this ability". And when I look at children, as you say, who have some limitation, some disability, I think that the Lord has given them other things, other beautiful things. One of the things that, I confess to you, touches my heart is when I am with people who cannot see, and many times, many times they say to me, "Can I look at you?". At the beginning I didn't

understand, but then I said, “Yes”, and they touched my face with their hands and *looked* at me. What do I see, there? Creativity: a person with a limitation always finds the strength to get round that limitation and this is creativity, a capacity to be creative, which is a challenge to that boy, that girl who has that limitation. And this is to be praised. And you, who do not have limitations, try to be creative too: do not get used to doing things; try to be creative, because creativity is what makes us resemble God. Do you understand?

Boy: Yes, thank you.

Ukrainian boy (translation): My name is Sachar, and I come from Ukraine. I do not have a question, but rather, a request: can you come to Ukraine to save all the children who are suffering there now?

Pope Francis: [Greeting in Ukrainian] I am glad you are here. I think a lot about the children in Ukraine, and this is why I have sent some Cardinals to help there, to be close to all the people, to the children. I would like to go to Ukraine; it is just that I have to wait for the moment to do so, you know? Because it is not easy to make a decision that can cause more harm than good to the world. I must find the right moment to do it. Next week, I will receive representatives from the Ukrainian government, who will come to speak, also to speak about a potential visit of mine there. Let's see what happens.

Boy: Thank you.

Boy: Pope Francis, I would like to ask you two things: you are a football supporter, you have four brothers and sisters; your father was a rail employee and your mother was a housewife. I would like to ask you something, another thing: How was your life? How did you live? Happily?

Pope Francis: Alright. You talked about dad, mum: dad worked, mum was a housewife, we are five siblings. And then, when we were kids, we all used to go together, with dad and mum, to the stadium on Sundays to watch the game, because we liked football very much. I used to play football, but you know, I was not good, and my teammates used to call me *pata dura*, meaning peg leg, because I wasn't good at it. And that's why they would ask me to be a goalkeeper, because I didn't have to move, and as a goalkeeper I did okay, more or less. This was my relationship with sports in my family. My siblings are all dead except for the last one, who is still alive; I am the oldest and the youngest one is still living. These are beautiful family memories.

Girl: Holy Father, pray for me, for the sick children.

Pope Francis: It is beautiful, that... What is your name?

Girl: Ludovica

Pope Francis: What Ludovica said is beautiful: “Pray for me”. It is something we should ask each other, that we pray for each other. Prayer. Because praying for each other is like attracting God’s gaze on us. Prayer is attracting God’s gaze. When you pray, God looks at you. And this, what you asked, is a beautiful thing. And you too, pray for others, you know? Pray for me and I will pray for you, and this relationship of asking for prayers is a relationship of brotherhood, of friendship, of two or three people who ask God to look at them. Praying is attracting God’s gaze on us, and this is beautiful. Onward!

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English, 10 June 2022

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