
Pope Francis: “You have been called by name”

“How many wolves lurk behind the pretence of false goodness, pretending to know who you are without loving you, pretending to believe in you and promising that you will make a name for yourself, only to abandon you when you no longer interest them. These are the illusions of the virtual world, and we must be careful not to be deceived, because so many realities that attract us and promise happiness end up being revealed for what they are: vain, superfluous things, substitutes that leave you empty inside.” Addressing the young people gathered in Lisbon, **Pope Francis** spoke without mincing words. “You are not here by chance. The Lord has called you by name, not just for these days, but from the beginning of your days,” Francis told the crowd of more than 500,000 young people gathered in Parque Eduardo VII for their first embrace with him during the welcoming ceremony for World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, the fourth of Bergoglio's pontificate and the first after the Covid-19 pandemic.

“No one is a Christian by chance, each one of us has been called by name”,

Francis said in his opening remarks: “Before the talents we have, before the shadows and wounds we carry within us, at the beginning of the fabric of life, we are called,” the Pope said: “We have been called because He loves us.” On one side the truth of Jesus, for whom we are faces, not numbers, on the other the snares of the net: “There are so many people today who know your name, but they do not call you by your name. In fact, your name is known, it appears on social media, it is processed by algorithms that correspond to your likes and preferences. However, none of this speaks to your uniqueness, but rather to your usefulness for market research.” Jesus no: “He trusts you, you are important to him.” Pope Francis reminded the young people, par excellence “allergic to falsehood and empty words”, that

“There is room for everyone in the Church.”

“The Church is and must increasingly become a home where the echo of the call by name that God addresses to each person resounds,” Francis said: “The Lord does not point his finger, he opens his arms: as Jesus showed us on the cross. He does not close the door, he invites us in; he does not keep us at a distance, he welcomes us. In these days we send out his message of love: 'God loves you, God calls you'.” “Asking questions is good, it is often better than giving answers, because those who ask questions remain restless, and restlessness is the best remedy against a routine that anaesthetises the soul”, the Pope said. Francis reiterated this in the [first meeting](#) of his second day in Portugal. Addressing young people at the Portuguese Catholic University of Lisbon, Francis urged them to be “wary of quick and easy answers, ready-made formulas, which can lead us into a maze; let us be wary of facile solutions that neatly resolve every issue without leaving room for deeper questions.” “To seek and to risk”: these are two words that describe the journey of pilgrims. “To be dissatisfied is to be human”, Francis said quoting Pessoa: “We should not be afraid to feel somewhat ill at ease in thinking that what we are doing is not enough. Being ill at ease, in this sense and to the right degree, is a good antidote to the presumption of self-sufficiency and to narcissism. We should not be alarmed, then, if we sense an inner thirst, a restless, unfulfilled longing for meaning and a future, *com saudades do futuro!* [Looking to the future]”, Francis exclaimed: “We should not be lethargic, but alive! Indeed, we should only be worried when we are tempted to abandon the road ahead for a resting place that gives the illusion of comfort, or when we find ourselves replacing faces with screens, the real with the virtual, or resting content with easy answers that anesthetize us to painful and disturbing questions.” “Keep seeking and to be ready to take risks”, the Pope repeated to young people: “At this moment in time, we are facing enormous challenges; let us find the courage to

see our world not as in its death throes, but in a process of giving birth,

not at the end, but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. work to bring about a new 'choreography', one that respects the 'dance' of life by putting the human person at the centre. If seeds were to protect themselves, they would completely destroy their generative power and condemn all of us to starvation. If winter were to persist, we could not marvel at the spring.

Have the courage, then, to replace your doubts with dreams. Replace your doubts with dreams!"

"Teachers of humanity. Teachers of compassion. Teachers of new opportunities for our planet and its inhabitants. Teachers of hope." It is the dream of the elderly Pope for the young university students. Caring for the common home means not being content with "mere palliative measures or timid and ambiguous compromises", for "halfway measures simply delay the inevitable disaster. In the name of progress, we have often regressed." "Yours can be the generation that takes up this great challenge", is Francis' encouragement: "You have the most advanced scientific and technological tools, but please, avoid falling into the trap of myopic and partial approaches. Keep in mind that we need an integral ecology, attentive to the sufferings both of the planet and the poor. We need to align the tragedy of desertification with that of refugees, the issue of increased migration with that of a declining birth rate, and to see the material dimension of life within the greater purview of the spiritual. Instead of polarized approaches, we need a unified vision." "**A life without crises is a life without flavour**, it is like distilled water: it has no taste, it has no flavour, it has no use," said Francis to the young members of the "[Scholas Occurrentes](#)" community whom he met at their headquarters in Cascais, encouraging them to "get their hands dirty". "God calls us precisely in our fears, in our closeness and in our loneliness," he reassured them at Parque Eduardo VII.

God "does not call those who feel able, but He makes able those whom He calls."

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