



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** *St Peter's Square*

Wednesday, 24 January

2018 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Apostolic Journey to Chile and Peru

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Audience is taking place in two connected places: you, here in the Square, and a group of sick children in the Hall. They will see you and you will see them: and so we are connected. Let us say 'hello' to the children in the Hall. It was better that they should not get too cold, and that's why they're there.

I returned two days ago from my [Apostolic Journey to Chile and Peru](#). A round of applause for Chile and Peru! Two good peoples, good.... I thank the Lord because everything went well: I was able to meet the People of God journeying in those lands — even those who are not on the journey, who are at a bit of a standstill ... but they are a good people — and to encourage the social development of those countries. I renew my gratitude to the civil Authorities and to the Brother Bishops, who welcomed me with so much thoughtfulness and generosity; as well as to all the collaborators and volunteers. Just think, that in each of the two countries there were more than 20,000 volunteers: 20,000 or more in Chile; 20,000 in Peru. Good people: mostly young people.

For various reasons my arrival in Chile was preceded by several protests, as you have read in the newspapers. And this made the motto of my visit even more appropriate and vital: "*Mi paz os doy* — My peace I give you". These are Jesus' words to the disciples, which we repeat in every Mass: the gift of peace, which only Jesus, dead and Risen, can give to those who entrust themselves to him. Not only does each one of us need peace, so too does the world today, in this third world war fought piecemeal.... Please, let us pray for peace!

At the meeting with the [political and civil Authorities of the country](#), I encouraged the path of democracy in Chile, as a path of solidary encounter open to diversity; for this purpose I indicated as a method the way of listening: in particular, listening to the poor, the young and the elderly, the immigrants, and also listening to the earth.

In the first Eucharist, celebrated *for peace and justice*, the Beatitudes resounded, especially “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9). A Beatitude to be witnessed to through the style of nearness, closeness, sharing, thus strengthening, with the grace of Christ, the fabric of the ecclesial community and of society as a whole.

In this style of nearness, gestures count more than words, and an important gesture I was able to make was to visit the women’s penitentiary in Santiago: the faces of those women, many of them young mothers, with their little ones in their arms, expressed so much hope, in spite of everything. I encouraged them to demand, of themselves and from the institutions, a serious journey of preparation in view of reintegration, as a horizon that gives meaning to the usual prison sentence. We cannot think of a prison, any prison, without this prospect of reintegration, because if there is not this hope of social reintegration, then prison is infinite torture. On the other hand, when one works to reintegrate — even those serving life sentences can be reintegrated — by working from prison to society, a dialogue opens up. But a prison must always have this dimension of reintegration, always.

With the priests, consecrated and Bishops of Chile I experienced two very intense encounters, rendered even more fruitful by the suffering shared on account of some wounds that afflict the Church in that country. In particular, I supported my brothers in the rejection of every form of compromise regarding the sexual abuse of minors, and at the same time, in their trust in God who, through this difficult trial, purifies and renews his ministers.

Of the other two Masses in Chile, one was celebrated in the south and one in the north. The one in the south, in Araucanía — a land where the indigenous Mapuche live — transformed this people’s ordeals and difficulties into joy, by launching an appeal for a peace that expresses the harmony of diversity and for the repudiation of every form of violence. The Mass in the north, in Iquique, between ocean and desert, was a tribute to the encounter among peoples, which is expressed in a unique way in popular piety.

The encounters with the youth and with the Catholic University of Chile responded to the crucial challenge to give foremost importance to the life of the new generations. To the young people I repeated the programmatic words of Saint Alberto Hurtado: “What would Christ do in my place?”. And at the University I proposed a model of integral formation which endows the Catholic identity with the ability to participate in the construction of united and pluralistic societies, where conflicts are not to be hidden but addressed in dialogue. There is always conflict: even at home; there always is. But mishandling conflict is even worse. Conflicts must not be hidden under the bed: conflicts should be brought to light, addressed and resolved through dialogue. Just think about the little conflicts that you surely have at home: they must not be hidden but addressed. Find the moment and talk about it. This is how conflict is resolved: with dialogue.

In Peru the motto of the Visit was: “*Unidos por la esperanza — United by hope*”. United not in a

sterile uniformity, everyone similar: this is not union; but in all the wealth of the differences that we inherit from history and culture. This was emblematically demonstrated by the encounter with the peoples of Peruvian Amazonia, at which the itinerary of the Pan-Amazon Synod convoked for October 2019 was announced. In the same way the moments experienced with the population of Puerto Maldonado and with the children of “The Little Prince Home” testified to it. Together, we said “no” to economic colonization and to ideological colonization.

In speaking to the political and civil Authorities of Peru, I expressed appreciation for the environmental, cultural and spiritual patrimony of that country, and I focused on the two realities that threaten it most gravely: ecological and social decline and corruption. I do not know if you have heard talk of corruption here ... I do not know.... It is not only in those parts: here too, and it is more dangerous than the flu! It confuses and ruins hearts. Corruption ruins hearts. Please, say “no” to corruption. I remarked that no one is exempt from responsibility in regard to these two scourges and that the task of opposing them pertains to everyone.

I celebrated the first public Mass in Peru at the ocean’s shore, in the city of *Trujillo*, where the storm known as a “coastal El Niño” hit the population harshly last year. Thus, I encouraged them to counter this but also other onslaughts such as organized crime, and the lack of education, work and safe housing. In Trujillo I also met with the priests and consecrated people of northern Peru, sharing with them the joy of the call and of mission, and the responsibility for communion in the Church. I exhorted them to be rich in remembrance and faithful to their roots. And popular devotion to the Virgin Mary is among these roots. Also in Trujillo the Marian celebration took place, in which I crowned the Virgin of the Gate, proclaiming her “Mother of Mercy and Hope”.

The final day of the journey, last Sunday, was spent in Lima, with a strong spiritual and ecclesial focus. In the most renowned Shrine in Peru, in which the painting of the Crucifixion called “*Señor de los Milagros*” is venerated, I met some 500 cloistered women religious, of contemplative life: a true “lung” of faith and of prayer for the Church and for all of society. In the Cathedral I performed a special act of prayer for the intercession of Peru’s Saints, which was followed by the encounter with the country’s Bishops, to whom I proposed the exemplary figure of Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo. To the youth of Peru, too, I pointed to the Saints as men and women who never wasted time “making over” their own image, but followed Christ, who looked at them with hope. As always, Jesus’ word gives full meaning to everything, and thus also the Gospel of the *final Eucharistic celebration* summed up God’s message to his people in Chile and in Peru: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15). In this way — the Lord seemed to say — you will receive *the peace that I give you* and you *will be united in my hope*. This is more or less a summation of this journey.

Let us pray for these sister nations, Chile and Peru, that the Lord may bless them.

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