



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO ARGENTINE YOUNG PEOPLE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE "PASCUA DE LA JUVENTUD"**

(Buenos Aires, Saturday 26 April 2014)

Dear Young People, Greetings and Blessed Easter!

The entire week is Easter! "This is the great day which the Lord has made!"

I wish to be close to you. The Archbishop of Buenos Aires asked me to do so, and I do so with pleasure. I want to accompany you for a moment on this day, on this 'Easter for Youth'.

As I was making my way down to make this recording, I was thinking about what I would say to you. I already told you to "make noise". I already told you "not to be afraid of anything". I already told you to "be free". And then several young people in the Gospel came to mind. Several young people who encountered Jesus or about whom he spoke. Perhaps this can help you. If you find this useful, hold onto this; if you don't find this helpful, disregard it.

I thought about the young Apostles, I thought about the rich young man, I thought about the young man who went in search of a new life with the inheritance he received from his father, I thought about the young man who died. The Apostles were young, several not so young, others yes. John was very young. And they were struck by the person of Jesus, they were enthusiastic with that astonishment one experience on meeting Jesus. And they hurried to tell their friends: "We have met the Messiah! We have found the One of whom the prophets speak!"

Encounter Jesus! Look at how the Apostle's behaved: later they gave in, they did not behave very well. Peter denied him, Judas betrayed him, the others fled. In other words, one has to struggle to be faithful to this encounter, to the encounter with Jesus.

I ask you: "when did you meet Jesus? What was your encounter with Jesus like? Have you

encountered Jesus or are you experiencing it now?" The young Apostles! Think of Peter, James, John, Nathaniel, how they encountered Jesus.

Another young man who came to mind is the rich young man, the one who approached Jesus with a blameless life, a good young man, and he asks him: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?". Jesus replies: "Observe the Commandments and you will go forward". "But if I have always observed them!". The Gospel says: "Jesus loved him" and then said to him "Look, you lack one thing: give all that you have to the poor and come with me and preach the Gospel". And that young man went away sorrowfully for he had great possessions and he did not have the courage to leave them behind for Jesus. And he went away with his money and his sadness. The first were joyous with that beautiful joy that an encounter with Jesus gives. The latter went away sorrowfully.

The other young man, who wanted to be clever, who wanted to write his own life story, who wanted to rebel against paternal authority, confronted his father and said to him: "give me the share of the property that falls to me that I may leave". And he left. All those years were years of carousing. He spent the money at pubs, on amusing himself. He squandered the money and it ran out. And what's more, an economic crisis hit and he had to look for work. But there wasn't any work, and he agreed to tend swine. And this young man, who had previously had so much money, who had taken it from his father, from his inheritance, who knew what it meant to stay in the best hotels and to be at the finest parties, who had lived grandly, became familiar with something he had never known before: hunger.

But God is very good. God takes advantage of our failures to speak to our heart. God did not say to that young man: "you are a failure, look at what you've done". He made him think. The Gospel says that "he came to himself". What shall I do with this life? Carousing didn't do me any good. How many of my father's hired labourers a salary and have enough bread to eat! I'm hungry and I am the Master's son; I will arise and go to my father, and I shall tell him the truth: "I have sinned against heaven and against you". And he went back.

What surprised him greatly was that his father had been waiting for him, for years! The Gospel says that he saw him coming from a distance, because the old man went up onto the terrace every afternoon to see if the boy was coming. And the father embraced him and rejoiced. And that great sinner, that great squanderer of all that the father had earned, found something he had never known: mercy's embrace.

Another young man in the Gospel: I also thought about the young man lying dead, at the gates of the city of Nain, and I thought about when they were burying him, the only son of a widowed mother. Jesus had compassion on the mother, not on the youth. But thanks to his mother, the boy was miraculously restored to life.

Who are you? An enthusiast, like the Apostles, before beginning the journey? The one who wants

to follow Jesus because he likes him but who is hindered by many things that keep him bound and who is unable to follow him, like the rich young man who is blocked by worldliness, by so many things? Like the one who squanders the entire inheritance from the father, but who had the courage to return and is experiencing mercy's embrace at this very moment? Or are you dead? If you are dead, know that Mother Church is weeping over you, and Jesus is able to revive you. Tell me, who are you? Tell yourself and this will give you strength.

"Father, it is unfair — the girls would say — because the examples you are giving are for the guys, what about us?". May you aspire to grow in tenderness and faithfulness in life. You are on that journey of those women who followed Jesus in the good and in the bad times. Woman possesses this great treasure of being able to give life, of being able to bestow tenderness, of being able to bestow peace and joy. There is only one model for you: Mary, the woman of fidelity, she who did not understand what was happening but who obeyed. She who, when she learned that her cousin was in need, went to her in haste, the Virgin of Readiness. She who fled like a refugee to that foreign land to save the life of her son. She who helped her Son to grow and stayed with him, and when her Son began to preach, she followed him. She who endured all that was happening to that little child, to that growing youth. She who stayed by her Son and told him what was the matter: "Look, they have no wine". She who, at the moment of the Cross, was by him. Woman has an ability to give life and to bestow tenderness that we men do not have. You are women of the Church. Of the Church, or of the Church which is masculine? No, the Church is not a "he", the Church is a "she". The Church is feminine, like Mary. This is your place. To be Church, to form Church, to stay next to Jesus, to bestow tenderness, to journey, to nurture growth.

May Mary, Our Lady of the Caress, Our Lady of Tenderness, Our Lady of Readiness ready to serve, point out the path to you. Good, now you are no longer mad, you have proven victorious over the boys. May this day end well for you. That each of you may encounter Jesus, the Risen Jesus. And I shall tell you one thing: Do not be afraid! Look to Jesus, look to Mary, and go forward!

"Father, I am a sinner!" He forgives you! Go forward, Happy Easter and do not forget to pray for me. May Jesus bless you, may the Virgin watch over you.

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