



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO INDONESIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
TIMOR-LESTE AND SINGAPORE
(2-13 September 2024)

MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS

"Sir John Guise" Stadium" (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea)
Monday, 9 September 2024

[Multimedia]

Dear young people, good morning!

I am happy to have spent these past few days in your country, where the sea, mountains and tropical forests coexist. It is, above all, *a young country inhabited by many young people!* We have all been able to contemplate the young face of the country, in particular through the beautiful performance that we just watched. Thank you! Thank you for your joy and for recounting the beauty of Papua "where the ocean meets the sky, where dreams are born and challenges vanish". Above all, thank you for setting before all of us a hopeful desire: "to face the future with smiles of hope!". And also with smiles of joy.

Dear young people, I did not want to leave here without meeting you, because you are the hope for the future. How do we build a future? What meaning do we want to give to our lives? I would like to answer these questions by starting with a story found at the beginning of the Bible, the story of the Tower of Babel. There we see *two models* clashing, two opposing ways of living and of building a society: one leads to *confusion* and *dispersion*, the other leads to the *harmony of encounter* with God and with our brothers and sisters. Confusion on one side and harmony on the

other. This juxtaposition is important.

I ask you now, what do you choose? The model of dispersion or the model of harmony, which one do you choose? [Young people answer: harmony!] You are good! Scripture tells us that, after the flood, Noah's descendants dispersed to different islands, each "with their own language, by their families" (*Gen* 10:5). Without removing their differences, God granted them a way to communicate with each other and thus find unity. In fact, "the whole earth had one language" (*Gen* 11:1). This means that the Lord created us in order to have good relations with others. Be careful: He did not create us for confusion but to have good relationships. This is very important.

Confronted with the variety of languages that divide and disperse, we need one language to help bring us together. But I ask you: what is the language that fosters friendship, that breaks down the walls of division and opens the way for us to enter into one brotherly embrace? What is this language? I would like to hear from some of you brave ones... Who can tell me what language this is? Who is the bravest, raise your hand and come forward here. [A boy replies: love]. Are you sure? [Young people answer: yes!] Think about it. And against love, what is there? Hate. But there is also something perhaps uglier than hate: indifference to others. Do you understand what hatred is and what indifference is? Do you understand? [Young people answer: yes!] You know that indifference is a very bad thing, because it means leaving others on the street and not caring about helping others. Indifference has its roots in selfishness.

You who are young must have the restlessness of heart to care for others. You must have the restlessness of making friends with each other. You must care for the one thing that I am going to say to you now, which perhaps may seem a little strange. There is a very important relationship in the life of a young person: the closeness to the grandparents. Do you agree with that? [Young people respond: yes!] Now, all together we say, "Long live grandparents!" [Young people respond: Long live grandparents!] Thank you very much.

Let us return to the biblical account of Noah's descendants. Each spoke a different language, even many dialects. I ask you: how many dialects are there here? One? Two? Three? But you, do you have a common language? Think carefully: do you have a common language? [Young people answer: yes!]. The language of the heart! The language of love! The language of closeness! And also, the language of service.

I thank you for your presence here. And I hope that all of you speak the deepest language: that all of you may be a "wantok" of love!

Dear young people, I am happy with your enthusiasm, with everything you do and what you think. But I wonder - be careful with the question - a young person, can he or she make a mistake? [Young people answer: yes!]. And an adult person, can he or she make a mistake? [Young people answer: yes!]. And an old person like me, can he or she make a mistake? [Young people answer:

yes!]. We can all make mistakes. Everyone one of us. But the important thing is to realize the mistake. That is crucial. We are not superman. We can make mistakes. This also gives us a certainty: that we must always correct ourselves. In life we can all fall, all of us. But there is a very beautiful song, I would like you to learn it, it is a song that young people sing when they are climbing in the Alps, in the mountains. The song goes like this, "In the art of climbing, what is important is not to not fall, but not to stay down." Do you understand this? [Young people answer: yes!] In life we can all fall, all of us! Is it important not to fall? I ask you. [Young people answer: no!] Yes, but what is more important? [Young people answer: get back up!] Don't stay down. If you see a friend, a companion your age who has fallen, what should you do? Laugh at that? [Young people answer: no!] You are to look at him and help him get up. Think that we only in one situation in life can look down on the other person: to help pick him up. To help him rise. Do you agree or disagree? [Young people answer: yes!] If one of you has fallen down, is a little down in moral life, has fallen down, should you give him a smack, like this? [Young people answer: no!] Very good.

Now let's repeat together in order to finish. In life the important thing is not to not fall, but not to stay down. Repeat it. Thank you very much.

Dear young people, thank you for your joy, for your presence, for your dreams. I pray for you. And you don't forget to pray for me, because this job is not easy. Thank you very much for your presence. Thank you very much for your hope.

Now, all together, let us pray. Pray for all us.

[Recitation of the Lord's Prayer in English].

Thank you very much. But, I forgot: if one falls, must one remain down? [Young people respond: no!] Good. And if we see a friend, a companion, falling down, should we leave him there or give him a smack? [Young people respond: no!] What should we do? [Young people respond: get back up!]

Thank you very much. God bless you. Pray for me, don't forget!

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Words of the Holy Father after the blessing

Before the final song, I forgot to say something. I would like to ask you, when you find someone who has fallen down, who has many problems, what are you supposed to do? Kick them when they are down? [Young people respond: No!] What should you do when you encounter someone who has fallen down? [Young people respond: get back up!] Let us do this gesture together. Thank you very much.

Words of the Holy Father after the final song

I would like to thank everyone who prepared this beautiful gathering. I thought of them after seeing this Salesian bishop come up dressed in work clothes! Let us give a round of applause to all who have prepared this event. There is something that I have forgotten: how should it be done? Like this? [lifting up a person who has fallen].