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Video Message of the Holy Father to young Vietnamese on the occasion of the Youth Day held in northern dioceses of Vietnam

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis to young Vietnamese on the occasion of the Youth Day organised in the northern dioceses of Vietnam, taking place on 19 and 20 November at the Minor Basilica of Phú Nhai in Bùi Chu, on the theme “Go home to your family” (*Mk* 5: 19):

Video message from the Holy Father

Dear young Vietnamese!

I know that you are experiencing a joyful and significant moment in this Youth Day, organised in the northern dioceses of Vietnam. You have come together as many young Catholics: let us thank God for this opportunity! With my heart I join you. And I also have a message for you, which revolves around a word: “home”, a word that is found in the theme of your Day: “Go home to your family” (*Mk* 5: 19).

In Vietnamese culture, as in other Asian cultures, no word is as wonderful as “home”. It envelops everything that is most dear to the heart of a human person: it includes not only family, kinship, but also native land and country. Wherever you go, always take your “home” with you. From this “home” flows your culture, which expresses family traditions, promotes love for neighbours, nurtures the virtue of honouring one’s parents, and preserves extraordinary respect for the elderly. “Go home” therefore means making a journey that brings you back to your origins and deepens your traditional and cultural heritage. They are your treasures. Never lose them!

As baptized persons, then, you are heirs to another larger “house”, namely the Church. The Church is a home, your home. You have been lucky to be born from the womb of a heroic Church, rich in luminous witnesses. I am thinking of the holy Vietnamese martyrs. I think of your grandparents and parents who suffered as a result of the war, losing almost everything except their faith, which they passed on to you as their most precious legacy. Behold, in this home of the Church you can always return to draw strength and inspiration for your faith; here you can always form your conscience in dignity; here each of you can find the way of life according to God’s

calling.

We must not forget that yours is a Church born of generous and enthusiastic missionaries. In a report sent to Rome, the Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes recounted this definition that was current among the Vietnamese: “Catholics are those who love one another. It is the religion of Love”. May these models of your first Christians guide you; and may gratitude to them always be a source of missionary enthusiasm for you.

Therefore, it is important not to think of your theme “Go home” as just an invitation to return. Do not think of “home” as something closed and limited. On the contrary, every journey given by our Lord is always a missionary journey to “tell … everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful He has been” (*Mk* 5: 19). Do not forget that you are still a minority among your people. There is still a majority that has the right, and is waiting, to hear the proclamation of the Gospel. Christ’s mandate is therefore still urgent for you today. Now it is up to you to build a young and joyful Church-home, full of life and fraternity. May the saving messages of God reach the hearts of your neighbours and compatriots through your witness. Always witness, never proselytism!

“How can we fulfil this task?” you might ask me. I propose these three characteristics for your witness in this time: *honesty*, *responsibility* and *optimism*. All three are accompanied by discernment.

In a world society led by materialism it is difficult to be faithful to one’s own identity and religious faith without the capacity for discernment, and this happens in all cities and countries of the world. Honesty may often cause disadvantages. A sense of responsibility may cause discomfort and require sacrifice. It may be that optimism appears strange in the face of the corrupt realities of this world society. But these very values are what your society, and also your Church, need from you. “You will shine among them like stars in the sky” (*Phil* 2: 15). Do not be afraid to make your beautiful Catholic identity shine forth. This will also make you more patriotic, more Vietnamese: a great love for your homeland, a great loyalty as patriots. I urge you to respond creatively and to make the most the programmes of your Episcopal Conference for these three years, the priority of which is youth ministry. May the example of the Servant of God Cardinal Van Thuan, a great witness of hope, support you.

Dear friends, I hope that this Day will be for you a pilgrimage to your cultural and religious roots, an experience of strengthened faith, and especially a renewed missionary sense. Love your home! Your family home, and that which is your homeland. Love the Vietnamese people, love your country! Be truly Vietnamese, with love for your country.

And finally I would like, together with all of you, to entrust to the Lord, the merciful Father, the thirty-nine Vietnamese migrants who died in England last month. It was painful, let us all pray for them.

God bless you. Have a good day and do not forget to pray for me. *Cha Chào Chúng Con* [I greet you]