



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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First World Children's Day (WCD 2024) – Meeting of the Holy Father Francis with Children in the Olympic Stadium, Rome (Dialogue of the Pope with Children)

The following is the dialogue between the Holy Father Francis and children during the meeting in the Olympic Stadium, Rome, on the occasion of the first World Children's Day, taking place in Rome on 25 and 26 May 2024:

Dialogue of the Holy Father Francis with Children

Question:

Hello Pope Francis, I am Jeronimo and I am Colombian. But is it true that peace is always possible?

Holy Father:

Thank you for your question, you are good! You are good, thank you!

The question asked by this child... what is your name? [The child answers: Jeronimo]

Jeronimo, he is called... he asked a question: "Is it true that peace is always possible?" What do you think? Is peace always possible, or not? [They answer: Yes] I can't hear you! [They answer: Yes]. Peace is always possible, but how do we make peace? Let us think, for example, about school: I have a problem with another child... [A child says: I say sorry...] But look... you say it, come, come... What must I do when I have a problem with another child? Say it here... [The child answers: I forgive and say I am sorry]. Apologizing and forgiving... and asking... come, come, come... say it, say here, loud! What must we do? Say it, say it... [The child answers: make peace]. Make peace... In our neighbourhood, when we play with children at school, at times there is something, some fight, yes or no? [They answer: Yes]. Yes... and is it important to continue the fight? [They

answer: No]. I don't understand... [They answer: No]. What must we do? [They answer: we must make peace]. And how do we make peace? [They answer: By forgiving and apologizing]. He says: by forgiving and apologizing, but I will show you a gesture of peace. Look carefully, look carefully, give me your hand... this is a gesture of peace. And now I would like you all to make this gesture with the boy or girl next to you. A gesture of peace, all together! All together! This is the gesture of peace! Peace is always possible! Thank you!

Question:

Dear Pope Francis, I am Lia Marise and I am from Burundi. In your opinion, what can we children do to make the world better?

Holy Father:

The question is, what can I do to make the world better. Answer the questions I will ask you. Pay attention. What can I do to make the world better? Quarrel? [The children answer: No]. I can't hear you. Quarrel? [They answer: No!]. Talk about it nicely? [They answer: Yes!]. Play together? [They answer: Yes!]. Help others? [They answer: Yes!]. By doing these things, the world will be better. Keep going forward. Good girl. May the Lord bless you.

Question:

Hello Pope Francis, I am Riccardo, a Rom child from Scampia. I would like to ask you, how can we love everyone, everyone, everyone?

Holy Father:

Good. Where are you from?

Riccardo:

Scampia.

Holy Father:

Take a candy. Ah, the question is a bit difficult, isn't it? How can we love everyone. Love everyone. It is not easy. We must start bit by bit: loving those who are closest, those who are closest to us. And then go forward. But if I do not love my schoolfriend, if I do not love the boy or girl near me, I cannot go forward. We must start by loving bit by bit. Do you understand? [Riccardo answers: Yes]. Bit by bit. Where are you from? [Riccardo answers: from Scampia]. From Scampia. Good. Thank you. Goodbye!

Question:

Hello, Pope Francis. Is it true that we are all brothers and sisters?

Holy Father:

It is true, it is true... a very deep question. She asks: "Is it true that we are all brothers and sisters?" Is it true or not? [She answers: Yes, it is true]. It is true. If we are brothers and sisters, are we friends? [They answer: Yes]. I can't hear... [They answer: Yes]. Are we enemies? [They answer: No]. Good! Thank you, thank you!

Question:

Good evening, Pope Francis. I am Luis Gabriel and I come from Nicaragua, and I would like to ask you this question: how come some people have neither home nor work?

Holy Father:

Thank you. Take a candy, two or three.

It is a very real question. It is not an easy question to answer. Why are there people who have neither home nor work? I ask you: this, that there are people who have neither home nor work, is it just? [The children answer: No]. No. I don't understand. Is it just? [They answer: No!]. This is an injustice, and unfortunately there are many people who have no work, no home, who live in tents. Very often they do not have anything to eat. Today we are happy, but this friend of ours, Luis Gabriel, asks us the question: "Why? Why?". This is the fruit of evil, this is the fruit of selfishness. And this is the fruit of war. If a person tries to climb over the heads of others, is this person good or bad? Is he good or bad? [The children answer: Bad!] I can't hear you. Bad, as you say. And there is a lot of evil and selfishness... Many people, many countries spend money to buy weapons to destroy, and there are people who have nothing to eat. Boys, girls, think about this. There are children who have nothing to eat, there are people who have no work, and this is a blow to humanity. I ask you a favour: every day, when you pray, pray for the children who suffer this injustice. Today Luis Gabriel has touched our heart. Let us be silent for a moment, everyone in silence, a little more silence. I can't hear the silence, more silence, more silence. And now, in this silence, each one of you, think about the boys and girls who have nothing to eat. In silence, everyone think. And let us pray to the Lord, that He may help resolve this injustice, for which we are all to blame. Thank you, boy, thank you. Take a candy. Good!

Question:

Hello Pope Francis, I am Federico and I am Italian. In the world we should all be equal, but there are children who suffer compared to us; why does this happen? And above all, what can we do to help them?

Holy Father

Thank you, Federico, thank you. It is a continuation of the earlier question. There are children who do not have basic necessities... we should all be equal, but we are not. Why does this happen? This happens because of selfishness, injustice... This is why you asked the question. This happens because people are selfish, because people are unjust. Thank you, Federico, and it is up to all of us to try to be more just, and to work so that there are not so many injustices in the world. We are all equal, but this unfortunately does not always happen. Thank you, Federico, may the Lord bless you! Take a candy.

Question:

Dear Pope, I am [...], I come from Indonesia and I wanted to ask you: if you could perform a miracle, what would you choose?

Holy Father:

Good! You are good, eh? If I could perform a miracle, what miracle would I choose. It is easy: that all children have what they need to live, to eat, to play, to go to school. This is the miracle I would like to work.

Thank you!

Thank you. May all children be happy. Let us pray to the Lord, that He perform this miracle. Thank you.

Question:

Hello Pope Francis, I am Iolanda. I wanted to ask you if it is right that so many elderly people are left alone, and no-one goes to visit them...

Holy Father:

And what do you think? Is it right, or isn't it right? What do you think? [She answers: It is wrong]. It is wrong, good! Thank you. Take a candy... Do you know that there are many elderly people who have given their life, who have raised a family, have educated their children, have educated their grandchildren, and are now alone, abandoned in a rest home. I ask you all: is this right, or isn't it? [They answer: It is not right]. I can't hear you... Yes or no? [They answer: No]. It is not right, and this is why we must visit our grandparents, go to visit them, or they are at home, go to see them, and if they are somewhere else, go to visit them... But can I ask you something... should we leave our grandparents abandoned? [They answer: No]. I can't hear... [They answer: No]. Grandparents have given us life, they have transmitted history. Grandparents are great! I ask: should we respect grandparents? [They answer: Yes]. Should we go and visit our grandparents? [They answer: Yes]. Should we listen to grandparents? [They answer: Yes]. Now, all together, "*Viva i nonni!*" [The Pope, together with the children, says: "*Viva i nonni!*"] Louder! [The Pope, together with the children, says: "*Viva i nonni!*"].

Question:

Hello Pope Francis, I am Malic and I come from the Seychelles. How did you feel when your team won the World Cup?

Holy Father:

Happy! Happy. But once they won using the hand, and this is not good. When my team wins, I feel happy. For me? From the Seychelles? [Malic gives him a gift]. Thank you very much. Thank you. God bless you.

Question:

Dear Pope Francis, I am Lucy and I come from Australia. Are you happy to spend time with children? Why?

Holy Father:

Thank you very much! You are from Australia! She asks me if I am happy to spend time with children, and why. I am truly happy. And I am happy because you are joyful, because you have the joy of hope in the future. Is it true that you are joyful? I can't hear you! Is it true or not? [The children answer: Yes]. Be brave and continue to be joyful.

Question:

Hello, I am Ido Ryu, and I would like to ask you a question, but after the film.

Screening of the short film "Everybody's Home", by the Manetti Bros

How can one open the doors of the heart of grown-ups?

Holy Father:

You did well, eh! Take the candy. The question is an intelligent one. She showed us in the film how she was moved by the poverty of poor people sleeping on the street. Her heart was opened. And she has a question: but there are so many people with closed hearts, with hard hearts, with hearts that look like walls. How do you open the hearts of grown-ups? This is not easy. But you children must have this illusion as she did of doing things that make grown-ups think. You saw a man who was poor, who had no home, who was in the rain, and she gave her clothing to others. You have to make these examples so that grown-ups will see this. You must knock on the door of the grown-ups: daddy, mummy, why are there children who have nothing to eat? Daddy, mommy, why are there people sleeping on the street? Daddy, Mommy, why are there people who have no work? You must ask these questions and, indeed, you must ask God! God, why this? May the Lord help us. You children can make a real revolution with these questions and with these anxieties. Keep going forward, with courage!

Now we will return home, joyful because of this meeting, this day. I thank you all, girls, boys, who have come. I thank the organizers who have done a lot, those who have helped. Now, all together, we will receive the blessing in silence. All together. In silence.

Blessing

Good evening! A good evening to you all.
