



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE

St. Peter's Square

Wednesday, 20 August 2014

Video

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning,

In recent days I made an [Apostolic Journey to Korea](#) and today, together with you, I thank the Lord for this great gift. My journey enabled me to visit a young and dynamic Church, founded on the testimony of martyrs and filled with missionary zeal, in a country which is a point of encounter between ancient Asian cultures and the perennial newness of the Gospel: both are encountered.

Once again I wish to express my gratitude to my dear brother Bishops of Korea, to the President of the Republic, to the other Authorities and to all those who collaborated in my visit.

The significance of this Apostolic Journey can be summed up in three words: *memory*, *hope* and *witness*.

The Republic of Korea is a country whose economic development is remarkably rapid. Its inhabitants are hardworking, disciplined and organized, and must maintain the strength inherited from their ancestors.

In this setting, the Church is the guardian of memory and hope: she is a spiritual family in which the adults pass on to the young the torch of faith received from their forebears. The memory of past witnesses becomes a new witness in the present and hope for the future. One can read, from this perspective, the two principal events of this journey: [the beatification of the 124 Korean](#)

Martyrs, who join those canonized by St John Paul II 30 years ago; and the *encounter with young people* on the occasion of the *Sixth Asian Youth Day*.

A young person is always a person in search of something worth living for, and a Martyr bears witness to something, rather to Someone worth giving one's life for. This reality is the Love of God, which was made flesh in Jesus, the Witness of the Father. In two moments of the journey dedicated to young people, the Spirit of the Risen Lord filled us with joy and hope, which the young people will take back to their countries, and that will do so much good!

In Korea the Church also safeguards the memory of the *primary role played by lay people*, both at the dawn of the faith and in the work of evangelization. In that land, in fact, the Christian community was not founded by missionaries but by a group of young Koreans in the latter half of the 1700s. They were captivated by several Christian texts which they studied in depth and chose as their rule of life. One of them was sent to Peking to receive Baptism and then this layman baptized his companions. From that first core a great community developed, which from the very start and for about a century was subjected to violent persecution, with thousands of martyrs. Thus, the Church in Korea was founded on faith, on missionary commitment and on the martyrdom of the lay faithful.

The first Korean Christians chose the apostolic community of Jerusalem as a model, practicing *fraternal love* which overcomes every social difference. This is why I have encouraged modern Christians to be generous in *sharing with the poorest and the excluded*, in line with Chapter 25 of the Gospel according to Matthew: "as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (v. 40).

Dear brothers and sisters, it is seen in the history of the faith in Korea that Christ does not nullify cultures, he does not suppress the journey of the peoples who, over centuries and millennia, have sought the truth and practiced love of God and neighbour. Christ does not abolish what is good, but he enhances it, he brings it to fulfillment.

What Christ fights and conquers, on the other hand, is the Evil One, who causes difficulties between individuals, between peoples; who creates exclusion and incites the idolatry of money; who places the poison of nothingness in the hearts of young people. Yes, Jesus has fought and conquered this with his Sacrifice of love. And if we remain in Him, in his love, we too, like the Martyrs, can live and witness to his victory. With this faith, we prayed and we still pray now so that *all the sons and daughters of the land of Korea*, who suffer the consequences of war and division, may fulfil *a journey of fraternity and of reconciliation*.

This journey was illuminated by the feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. From on high, where she reigns with Christ, may the Mother of the Church journey with the People of God, support their steps in the most arduous conditions, comfort those in their trials and keep the

horizon of hope open. Through her motherly intercession, may the Lord always bless the Korean people, grant them peace and prosperity; and bless the Church which lives in that land, that it may be ever fruitful and filled with the joy of the Gospel.

Greetings:

I offer an affectionate greeting to the young altar servers from Malta, and I thank them for their faithful service in Saint Peter's Basilica this past month. Upon all the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's Audience, including those from the United Kingdom and Japan, I invoke the joy and peace of the Lord Jesus. God bless you!

I also thank you for the prayers and condolences for what happened to my family. The Pope has a family too. There were five of us siblings; I have 16 nieces and nephews. One of my nephews had a car accident: his wife and two young children — one was two years old and the other several months — died and he is currently in critical condition. I thank you so very, very much for your condolences and prayers.

I address a special thought to the *young people*, especially those from the Dioceses of San Miniato and Livorno, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Today we celebrate the feast day of St Bernard, Abbot and Doctor of the Church. May his love for Our Lady, Star of the Sea inspire the Christian life of each one: may we learn to look to and to invoke Mary that we may never be defeated by sin and may be able to experience the fruits of the grace given us by Jesus, her Son.