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Greetings to pilgrims: remember the sick, and St. Josephine Bakhita

In his greetings to the faithful and pilgrims from various countries present in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father welcomed the young people from France, affirming that he will be in communion of prayer with the pilgrims who celebrate Our Lady of Lourdes this Saturday, and especially with the sick. “May Mary Immaculate give them the courage of hope and keep them in peace”.

Then, returning to the theme of his catechesis, he warmly greeted German pilgrims and Spanish speakers, encouraging the latter to “invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit in your lives, and within your families and communities, that He may revive the call of charity in us, and make us living signs of hope for all the human family”.

He also welcomed Portuguese-speaking faithful. “When God decided upon His coming to earth, it was enabled by the ‘yes’ of Mary Immaculate. She lived like all women of her time; but, in her simple everyday life, she gave free passage to God. Do as Mary did: give free passage to God in your life, and you will be blessed!”

The Pope greeted English speaking pilgrims as well as Arabic speakers, especially those from the Holy Land. He reminded Polish faithful that twenty-five years ago St. John Paul II instituted World Day of the Sick, so that it would be for all faithful a “powerful moment of prayer, sharing, and offering of suffering for the good of the Church, reminding everyone to recognise in the face of the infirm brother the Holy countenance of Christ” (Letter for the Institution of World Day of the Sick, 13 May 1992, 3). “May this day inspire in us the sensibility and the desire to offer material and spiritual support to the sick who live among us. God bless you!”, he exclaimed.

Finally, he greeted Italian-speaking pilgrims, including the members of the Committee of the World Day of Prayer against human trafficking, to whom he conveyed his heartfelt gratitude for their work; young people participating in the meeting promoted by the Youth Movement of the Popular European Party; and various other groups and associations. He expressed his hope that the encounter with the Holy Father would give them all “a new impulse in faith, strengthening hope and making charity fruitful”.

“May the memory of Sister Josephine Bakhita, who as a child was a victim of human trafficking, increase your attention, dear young people, to your peers who are disadvantaged and in difficulty; help you, dear sick people,

to offer your sufferings for the Christian education of the new generations; and encourage you, dear newly-weds, to trust in Providence and not only in your own capacities. Marriage without God's help does not go forward; you must ask for it every day. And you, dear sick people: next Saturday is the day of prayer to the Virgin of Lourdes, for you: let us pray together. Thank you".
