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Apostolic Trip of the Holy Father Francis to Myanmar and Bangladesh (26 November – 2 December 2017) – Holy Mass at the Kyaikkasan Ground in Yangon

Holy Mass at the Kyaikkasan Ground in Yangon

This morning, after leaving the archbishopric in Yangon, the Holy Father Francis transferred by car to the Kyaikkasan Ground.

Upon arrival, after a tour among the faithful by popemobile, at 8.30 local time (3.00 Rome time), the Pope celebrated Holy Mass on the 34th week of Ordinary Time.

Following the Eucharistic Celebration, the archbishop of Yangon, Cardinal Charles Bo, S.D.B., greeted the Holy Father. After the final blessing, Pope Francis returned by car to the archbishopric, where he lunched with members of the papal entourage.

The following is the homily pronounced by the Holy Father after the proclamation of the Gospel:

Homily of the Holy Father

Dear Brothers and Sisters, *[greetings in Burmese language]*

Before coming to this country, I very much looked forward to this moment. Many of you have come from far and remote mountainous areas, some even on foot. I have come as a fellow pilgrim to listen and to learn from you, as well as to offer you some words of hope and consolation.

Today's first reading, from the Book of Daniel, helps us to see how limited is the wisdom of King Belshazzar and his seers. They knew how to praise "gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone" (*Dn* 5:4), but they did not have the wisdom to praise God in Whose hand is our life and breath. Daniel, on the other hand, had the

wisdom of the Lord and was able to interpret His great mysteries.

The ultimate interpreter of God's mysteries is Jesus. He is the wisdom of God in person (cf. *1 Cor 1:24*). Jesus did not teach us His wisdom by long speeches or by grand demonstrations of political or earthly power but by giving His life on the cross. Sometimes we can fall into the trap of believing in our own wisdom, but the truth is we can easily lose our sense of direction. At those times we need to remember that we have *a sure compass* before us, in the crucified Lord. In the cross, we find the wisdom that can guide our life with the light that comes from God.

From the cross also comes *healing*. There, Jesus offered His wounds to the Father for us, the wounds by which we are healed (cf. *1 Pet 2:24*). May we always have the wisdom to find in the wounds of Christ the source of all healing! I know that many in Myanmar bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible. The temptation is to respond to these injuries with a worldly wisdom that, like that of the king in the first reading, is deeply flawed. We think that healing can come from anger and revenge. Yet the way of revenge is not the way of Jesus.

Jesus' way is radically different. When hatred and rejection led him to His passion and death, He responded with forgiveness and compassion. In today's Gospel, the Lord tells us that, like Him, we too may encounter rejection and obstacles, yet He will give us a wisdom that cannot be resisted (cf. *Lk 21:15*). He is speaking of the Holy Spirit, through Whom the love of God has been poured into our hearts (cf. *Rom 5:5*). By the gift of his Spirit, Jesus enables us each to be *signs* of His wisdom, which triumphs over the wisdom of this world, and His mercy, which soothes even the most painful of injuries.

On the eve of His passion, Jesus gave Himself to His apostles under the signs of bread and wine. In the gift of the Eucharist, we not only recognize, with the eyes of faith, the gift of His body and blood; we also learn how to *rest in His wounds*, and there to be cleansed of all our sins and foolish ways. By taking refuge in Christ's wounds, dear brothers and sisters, may you know the healing balm of the Father's mercy and find the strength to bring it to others, to anoint every hurt and every painful memory. In this way, you will be faithful witnesses of the reconciliation and peace that God wants to reign in every human heart and in every community.

I know that the Church in Myanmar is already doing much to bring the healing balm of God's mercy to others, especially those most in need. There are clear signs that even with very limited means, many communities are proclaiming the Gospel to other tribal minorities, never forcing or coercing but always inviting and welcoming. Amid much poverty and difficulty, many of you offer practical assistance and solidarity to the poor and suffering. Through the daily ministrations of its bishops, priests, religious and catechists, and particularly through the praiseworthy work of *Catholic Karuna Myanmar* and the generous assistance provided by the Pontifical Mission Societies, the Church in this country is helping great numbers of men, women and children, regardless of religion or ethnic background. I can see that the Church here is alive, that Christ is alive and here with you and with your brothers and sisters of other Christian communities. I encourage you to keep sharing with others the priceless wisdom that you have received, the love of God welling up in the heart of Jesus.

Jesus wants to give this wisdom in abundance. He will surely crown your efforts to sow seeds of healing and reconciliation in your families, communities and the wider society of this nation. Does He not tell us that His wisdom is irresistible (cf. *Lk 21:15*)? His message of forgiveness and mercy uses a logic that not all will want to understand, and which will encounter obstacles. Yet His love, revealed on the cross is ultimately unstoppable. It is like *a spiritual GPS* that unfailingly guides us towards the inner life of God and the heart of our neighbour.

Our Blessed Mother Mary followed her Son even to the dark mountain of Calvary and she accompanies us at every step of our earthly journey. May she obtain for us the grace always be to messengers of *true wisdom*, *heartfelt mercy* to those in need, and the *joy* that comes from *resting in the wounds* of Jesus, who loved us to the end.

May God bless all of you! May God bless the Church in Myanmar! May He bless this land with His peace! God bless Myanmar!

[Greetings in Burmese language]
