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Video Message of the Holy Father for the Archdiocesan Synod in Buenos Aires (Argentina, 27 October 2018)

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis for the Archdiocesan Synod to be held in Buenos Aires today, 27 October 2018.

Text of the Video Message

Dear brothers and sisters,

Cardinal Poli has asked me to record a message for this Synod Day and I do so gladly. I follow the Synod from here, through the diocesan bulletin, which as now comes with pictures, with photos, I see more clearly and I know that they are working hard. I also know that the cardinal has already visited almost all the parishes during this Synod time, before it began, to speak with the parish communities. So, you see that there is movement. And the Synod is that: moving, walking, walking together, finding agreement. And suppose ... when you walk, you are supposed to meet someone and you talk and you listen to him, and that you reflect. That is, you journey in order to encounter, listen and reflect. Do you know what the hardest thing is? The second: listening. Because while the other is talking to me, I am already thinking of what I am going to say. No, listen in silence! And then, what you feel, tell them. But listen. "The apostolate of the ear", please, do not forget. It is very important.

The Church, during this journey, must be blessed, because walking together so as to grow together, in the particular Church, attracts the blessing of God. And on this journey you will find very good things and some not so good things. So as not to be negative, I will start with the non-good ones and leave the good ones for the end, like the dessert. I will mention three difficulties, three things that have to be taken care of along the way.

First, clericalism. To walk in synodality means that the whole diocesan, parochial or collegial community, such as a school, walks together. They are all God's people. Sometimes it is a pity when in a parish the only thing the faithful do is see what the priest says, and the priest stops being a pastor and becomes the master of an estate. No, all of them. I will ask you a question. For example, in your parish, is there a council for economic matters? In

your parish, is there pastoral advice? “No, no, everything is done by the priest”. Well, there they are in a state of pure clericalism. So, beware of clericalism, which is a perversion in the body of the Church. It is all the people of God, this is the Church, and may they all journey together. Journey to find what God wants, to manifest the faith, to rejoice with faith. So, first, the danger that is always present in the Church is clericalism. Defend yourselves!

Second, spiritual worldliness. Living the Gospel, but according to worldly criteria. No, the Gospel is lived by evangelical criteria. To live in a worldly way ... I do not know, speaking for the audience, but not from the heart, with the human values that the Lord gave us and with the Christian values that He revealed to us. So, beware of worldliness. Notice that this does not come from me; it is what Jesus asked of the Father for the disciples: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one”, from the spirit of the world. And the spirit of the world is filtered everywhere, everywhere! “Now this is fashionable – everyone is there, following fashion, now this is fashionable, now it is fashionable to think like this...”. And, amid this worldliness, keep your eyes open, do not be willing to take in anything. There is a word that says a lot. Beware of “ideological colonizations”. “Colonize”: we were a colony, Latin America was all a colony, Africa was a colony, Asia was a colony ... So we thought that colonizing is that the conquerors come, they took the territory and they ruled, because that is how we saw it in history. But there is also the colonization of the mind, the “ideological colonization”, when from other parts criteria are given to you that are neither human, nor of your country and certainly not Christian: that is worldliness. Living naively. So, that is the second danger: worldliness.

The third danger, which for me is the one that most weakens ecclesial communities, is gossip. Gossip is like the measles, which rages and rages, and you cannot live without flaying other people. Beware of gossip! Read what the Apostle James says about gossips. How many times we hear: “Oh, that lady is very good, she goes to church on Sundays, she goes to church every day, but she is a gossip”. A blessed service such a person renders to the Church! There is a remedy for not being a gossip: bite your tongue. It will swell, but that way it will heal. And when you want to make a comment, to flay someone, or even just insinuate something, bite your tongue and ask Jesus to take away that vice. The locals are gossips, not only us, everywhere. But we are gossips with a certain brilliance.

In this Synod path, may everyone make the effort never to say a word or make a comment that diminishes the other.

The three dangers we find on the road, on this journey of encounter, listening and reflection, the three dangers we will find are clericalism, worldliness and gossip. Defend yourselves from that. “Good, father, that’s fine. And now, what are the certainties?” You cannot have any certainties before setting out on the road: there is no life insurance, there is no travel insurance for this. Every day you have to stand before God and walk. “Yes, but with what surety, father, do I do that?” You have two assurances that are infallible: first, the beatitudes. Enter into the spirit of the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes, what are they? I am tempted to say them out loud. I may be thinking badly, but I think that less than half the stadium knows them by heart. The Beatitudes ... take the Gospel of Matthew and read it. And if you want them to be shorter, you can see Luke’s, which are shorter; but, the spirit is the same: the spirit of the Beatitudes. That is what Jesus wants of the disciple. Those are the good things, and they are the assurances. With that, with this air, with this atmosphere of bliss the Synod will not fail. I assure you. The Beatitudes.

And the other security is to read the protocol on which they are going to judge us. And the protocol on which Jesus is going to comment on this Synod, when it ends. And you have it in Matthew 25: the works of charity. But you have to listen to them as the Lord says. Read every day – those who wish to journey in the Synod - read the Beatitudes every day, and Matthew 25, and there they will be sure.

Walk, do not be still, walk to meet each other, to listen, to reflect together. Defend yourself from clericalism, worldliness and gossip. And strengthen yourself with the Beatitudes and with Matthew 25. And all this with prayer, that the most important thing of all that I said is the latter. Pray, pray as Jesus taught us. Pray for each other: for those who are on the path, for those who do not want to walk, for those who journey with difficulty, for those who are far away, for the archdiocesan Church, for the archbishop. Pray. And in this spirit of prayer, certainly the Synod will triumph. May God bless you, and as you pray, pray for me too. Thank you.
