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Video Message of the Holy Father Francis to the population of San Cristóbal de La Habana, Cuba, for the celebrations for the fifth centenary of the founding of the city

The following is the text of the video message that the Holy Father Francis has sent to the population of San Cristóbal de La Habana, Cuba, on the occasion of the celebrations of the fifth centenary of the founding of the city:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters of Havana:

I am happy to be able to join, through this video message, in the celebration of the fifth centenary of the foundation of your city of San Cristóbal de La Habana.

Interwoven in the five hundred years of history of that beloved people, there are the many lives given by others, many dreams, efforts, and shared sacrifices to build the present and the future of the children of Cuba.

On this occasion, I would like to highlight three historical aspects that were present from the beginning, and still continue to be pillars for this time. And these are faith, charity and hope.

Faith is at the roots of the city. And roots sustain life that is gestating, roots nourish, roots help to grow. Do not forget those roots, the testimony of faith of your ancestors. The founding act of the city of Havana was the celebration of Holy Mass. Therein lies the centrality of Christian life: in the Eucharist, the sacrament that brings us Christians together as a people in the presence of the Lord Who speaks to us, nourishes us, and sends us to be witnesses in the midst of the world. Witnesses of the Gospel.

The Lord Jesus invites us to be witnesses of faith and also witnesses of charity and love. Charity is another aspect that distinguishes the Cuban people. You have learned it from Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who from the

beginning was present among you in the invocation of the Virgin of Charity of Copper. The charity that Mary teaches us is to give love, and to give it with tenderness, with dedication, and to give love in daily life. Where? Well, in the family, among neighbours, at work, with everyone and always. It doesn't matter if one thinks in one way or another. Let there be love, let there be harmony. And this is how the unity of the Cuban people is founded. Harmony among you. Each one of you. May Mary teach us to live this charity, which is not only to give "something" to others, but above all to "give" ourselves. To live the "social friendship" that helps a people to move forward.

And finally, another pillar is hope: may the Jubilee you celebrate be a reason to renew hope. Just as Saint Christopher lifted up and carried his brothers on his shoulders, so also among yourselves, please support each other, help each other, encourage each other and continue without faltering, always with your eyes on the goal. There will always be difficulties in life, peoples have difficulties, but this unity of a people, united in charity, in the hope of moving forward, helps the people to grow strong.

I ask the Lord that these pillars of faith and charity and hope that sustain them, as well as the joy that characterizes them, may be renewed and increased in this time of Jubilee grace.

May Jesus bless you, may He bless all the Cuban people, whom I remember with affection when I visited you: What a great people! And may *Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre* take care of you. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you very much.
