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Message of the Holy Father to the participants in the 20th Latin American Meeting of Youth Pastoral Leaders (Lima, 18-23 November 2019)

To His Most Reverend Excellency

Msgr. Alfredo Vizcarra Mori, S.J.

Vicar Apostolic of Jaén

President of the Episcopal Commission for Laity and Youth

From the Vatican, 4 November 2019

Dear brother:

I cordially greet you, as well as the organizers and participants in the Twentieth Latin American Meeting of National Youth Pastoral Leaders, which is taking place in the *Casa de Convivencia Juan Pablo II*, in Balneario de Santa Rosa, with the motto: “*Los jóvenes somos tierra sagrada, el ahora de Dios*” (“We young people are sacred ground, the ‘now’ of God”).

By collaborating in the field of youth ministry, you are rendering the Church a service that cannot be neglected. Young people speak to us and challenge us, they make us realize the lights and shadows of our community, and with their enthusiasm they encourage us to give responses in keeping with our times. They are the fertile and new soil that God gives to Christian communities. You are entrusted with the task of accompanying them with respect and gentleness on the path of their personal maturation, so that they may be strengthened in faith and, with the grace of the Lord, bear fruits of love and hope.

In America, continent of hope, as in the whole world, young people are the “now” of God, because His Son Jesus, Who is the manifestation of His goodness, walks and remains with them, and through Jesus, the Father continues speaking to us in the language of His love, which “has to do more with raising up than knocking down,

with reconciling than forbidding, with offering new changes than condemning, with the future than the past” (Welcome Ceremony and opening of WYD, Panama, 24 January 2019). I encourage you increasingly to deepen your knowledge of the person of Jesus, so that living in the intimacy of His heart, you may become missionary disciples and witnesses of His tenderness, and other young people may draw closer to Him, He Who is eternally young, experiencing the joy of His friendship and leading an existence founded on Christian fraternity and solidarity.

With these sentiments, I ask the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of America, to support with His grace the pastors, those responsible for youth ministry and all the young people of Latin America, strengthening them in reciprocal love and accompanying them in their daily lives.

May Jesus bless them and may the Holy Virgin help them in their good intentions. And please do not forget to pray for me.

Fraternally,

FRANCIS
