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Message of the Holy Father to the participants in the Youth Festival in Medjugorje (Mladifest) (1 to 6 August 2022)

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

To participants in the Youth Festival

Međugorje, 1 to 6 August 2022

Dear friends,

In that time, the evangelist Matthew recounts, Jesus addressed everyone saying: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (*Mt 11: 28-30*). As in that time, so today too Jesus addresses you all, dear young people, and with the guiding words of the Festival, inspired by the Gospel passage I have just mentioned, I invite you: “*Learn from me, and you will find rest*”.

The Lord does not reserve these words only to the apostles or to some of his friends, but rather he addresses them to all those who are weary and oppressed. He knows how difficult life can be, and that there are many things that trouble the heart: so many disappointments, various wounds from the past, burdens we carry and injustices we endure, many uncertainties and worries. Faced with all of this, Jesus says to us: “Come to me and learn from me”. It is an invitation to move, not to stand still, frozen and afraid in front of life, and to trust in Him. It seems easy, but in dark moments it comes naturally to withdraw into ourselves. Instead, Jesus wants to bring us out, and so he says to us, “Come”.

The way out is in relationships, in raising our eyes to He who truly loves us. Then, it is not enough just to come out of ourselves: we also need to know where to go, because there are many deceptive prospects that promise us a better future, but which leave us in the solitude of before. So, Jesus indicates where to go: “Come to *me*”.

Dear friends, with an open heart, *go* to Him, *take* his yoke and *learn* from Him. Go to the Master to become his

disciples and heirs of his promise of peace. Take up his yoke, which will let you discover God's will and will make you partakers of the mystery of his cross and his resurrection. The "yoke" Christ speaks of is the law of love, it is the commandment that he left to his disciples: love one another, as I have loved you (*Jn 15: 12*). Because the true remedy for humanity's wounds is a style of life based on fraternal love, which has its root in love of God.

Walking together with Him and imitating Him, you will learn from Him. He is a Master who does not impose on others the burdens he does not carry. He addresses the humble, the small and the poor because He made himself poor and humble. And to learn, first of all, one must be humble and acknowledge one's own ignorance and the pride that makes us think we can do everything by ourselves and with our own strength. It is necessary to keep an eye open to the Word of the Master. In this way one learns his heart, his love, his way of thinking, seeking and acting. It takes courage to stay close to him and to imitate him.

Dear friends, do not be afraid, go to Him with all that you bear in your heart: he is the only Lord who offers true refreshment and true peace. Follow the example of Mary, his and our Mother, who will take you to Him. Entrust yourselves to the *Stella Maris*, sign of hope on troubled seas, who guides us to the harbour of peace. She, who knows her Son, will help you imitate him in the relationship with God the Father, in compassion towards your neighbour and in the awareness of what we are required to be, sons of God. At this time, in the heart of the summer, the Lord invites you to spend your vacations with Him, in the most special place there is: your own heart.

Dear young people, while you are resting in Jesus Christ during these days, I entrust you all to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our heavenly Mother, so that, by her intercession and her example, you may take upon you the light and gentle yoke of following Christ. May the gaze of God the Father, who loves you personally, accompany you every day, so that, in your relations with others, you may be witnesses of the peace you will receive as a gift. I pray for this and I bless you, and I ask you too to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 16 July 2022,

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

FRANCIS
