



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO GEORGIA AND AZERBAIJAN
(30 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER 2016)

ANGELUS

Salesian Centre - Baku
Sunday, 2 October 2016

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this Eucharistic celebration I have given thanks to God with you, and also for you: here the faith, after the years of persecution, has accomplished wonders. I wish to recall the many courageous Christians who trusted in the Lord and were faithful in the face of adversity. As did Saint John Paul II, I offer you the words of the Apostle Peter: "Honour to you who believe" (1 Pt 2:7; *Homily*, Baku, 23 May 2002).

Our thoughts turn now to the Virgin Mary, who is venerated in this country not only by Christians. To her we address the words of the Angel Gabriel who brought her the good news of salvation, prepared for humanity by God.

In the light that radiates from the maternal gaze of Mary, I offer a warm greeting to you, dear faithful of Azerbaijan, as I encourage each of you to witness joyfully to faith, hope and love, united among yourselves and with your Pastors. I greet and thank in a particular way the Salesian family, who take such good care of you and who promote various good works, and the Missionary Sisters of Charity: continue with enthusiasm your work in the service of all!

Let us entrust these intentions to the intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God and let us invoke her protection upon your families, the sick and the elderly, and upon all those who suffer in

body or spirit.

[*Angelus*]

[*Blessing*]

Someone may think that the Pope wastes so much time: travelling so many kilometres to visit a small community of 700 people, in a country of 2 million. Yet it is a community which is not uniform, because among you there are several languages spoken: Azeri, Italian, Spanish... many languages. It is a community on the peripheries. But the Pope, in this, imitates the Holy Spirit: he also descended from heaven to a small community in that closed periphery of the Cenacle. And to that community, which was fearful, felt poor and perhaps persecuted or rejected, the Holy Spirit imparts fortitude, power, and bold eloquence to go forth and proclaim the name of Jesus! And the doors of that community in Jerusalem, which were closed for fear or shame, were thrust wide open releasing the power of the Spirit. The Pope wastes time as the Holy Spirit did in those days!

Only two things are necessary: Mary was among that community. Don't forget our Mother! And in that community resided charity, a fraternal love, which the Holy Spirit poured into their hearts. Have courage! Go ahead! Without fear, go ahead!