



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2021 VIRTUAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONGRESS
SPONSORED BY THE LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
ON THEME "PROCLAIM THE PROMISE!"**

[18-21 February 2021]

Friday, 19 February 2021

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters,

A warm greeting to all the participants of the Religious Education Congress presented by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, which is celebrating its 65th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of “Youth Day”. Congratulations for these initiatives, which have already undertaken a long and fruitful journey, and which are currently taking place in virtual form.

There is no doubt that we are faced with difficult times. It is a time of crisis. How fitting in this context, is the call made by this Congress: “Proclaim the Promise!”. We need to proclaim and remember that we have God’s promise, and that God always keeps his promises (cf. 1 *Cor* 1:9-11). We must also remember that “every woman and man, and every new generation, brings the promise of new relational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies” (*Fratelli tutti*, 196).

The pandemic has marked the life of the people and history of our communities. Faced with this and other realities, it is necessary to build a tomorrow, to look towards the future, and for that, it takes effort, strength and dedication on the part of everyone. We need to be like the Good Samaritan, which means letting ourselves be affected by what we see, knowing that suffering will change us, and that we must engage with the suffering of others. The witness of love given generously and freely that we have witnessed during these months, — so many testimonies — have left an indelible mark on the conscience and also on the fabric of society, teaching us how much closeness, care, accompaniment and sacrifice are necessary to nourish fraternity. They

were the proclamation and fulfilment of God's promise. Let us remember a universal principle: no one ever comes out of a crisis the same, you emerge better or worse, but no one comes out of it the same. In crises, one's heart is revealed: its solidity, its mercy, its greatness, its meagreness. Crises confront us with the need to choose and to opt for and commit ourselves to a path.

“In this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. ... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together”, and to look ahead! (*Fratelli tutti*, 8).

A special greeting to young people. I invite you to hope, which “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning” (*Fratelli tutti*, 55). You young people, be the poets of a new human beauty, a new fraternal and friendly beauty!

And let us remember this other reality: “Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice,” — but yes — “brothers and sisters all” (*Fratelli tutti*, 8). May this be the great drive that you will experience, share and take with you from your participation in this Religious Education Congress.

I entrust you to the tenderness of Mary, Mother of the Church, and I impart my heartfelt blessing. Thank you ministers and teachers, for all that you do. And, please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

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