



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO LUXEMBOURG AND BELGIUM

(26-29 September 2024)

MEETING IN THE PARISH OF SAINT GILLES

GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS

Parish of Saint Gilles (Brussels)

Saturday, 28 September 2024

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning,

Thank you for the invitation to breakfast! It is nice to start the day among friends, and such is the atmosphere at Saint Gilles.

I thank Marie-Françoise, Simon and Francis for what they said, and I am happy to see how the love here continually fuels everyone's fellowship and creativity. You even invented La Biche de Saint Gilles, and I imagine it is a very good beer! In the afternoon, I will tell you whether it is good or not!

As Marie-Françoise said, "mercy points the way to hope" – very beautiful – and looking at each other with love helps everyone – everyone! – to turn to the future with confidence and to set out anew each day. Charity is like a fire that warms the heart, and there is no woman or man on earth who does not need its warmth.

It is true that there are not just a few problems to be confronted, you know this well, as Simon told us. We sometimes face rejection and misunderstanding, as Francis remarked, but the joy and strength that come precisely from shared love are greater than any difficulties. Whenever we engage in the dynamics of solidarity and mutual care, we realize that we receive much more than we give (cf. *Lk* 6:38; *Acts* 20:35).

At the end of our meeting, a statue of Saint Lawrence will be gifted to the parish. He was a deacon and martyr of the early centuries. When his accusers asked him for the treasures of the Church, he famously presented the most fragile members of the Roman Christian Community to which he belonged. They are the most important, but also the most fragile: the poor, the needy.

It was not a figure of speech or a mere provocation. It was and is the plain truth. The Church has its greatest wealth in its weakest members, and if we really want to know and show its beauty, it will do us all good to give ourselves to each other like that, in our littleness, in our poverty, without pretension and with much love. This was first taught to us by the Lord Jesus, who became poor in order to enrich us with his poverty (cf. *2 Cor.* 8:9).

Dear friends, thank you for welcoming me among you and thank you for the journey you are making together. Thank you also for breakfast! I bless you all and pray for you. And I ask you, please, pray for me as well. Thank you.