



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO SWEDEN

(31 OCTOBER - 1 NOVEMBER 2016)

IN-FLIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS ***FROM SWEDEN TO ROME***

Papal Flight

Tuesday, 1 November 2016

[Multimedia]

Greg Burke:

Thank you, Holy Father. You often speak about “journeying together”, with regard to the different religions. We too have made part of that journey together, some for the first time. We have a Swedish journalist among us – I think it has been quite a while since we’ve had a Swedish journalist on board. We will begin there. Elin Swedenmark of the Swedish Agency “TT”.

Pope Francis:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your work, and for putting up with the cold... We left just in time, since I’m told that the temperature this evening is going to fall another five degrees. We left just in time! Thank you very much. Thank you for your company and for your work.

Elin Swedenmark:

Thank you. Holy Father, yesterday you spoke about the revolution of tenderness. Right now, we are seeing an increasing number of people from countries like Syria and Iraq seeking refuge in European countries. Yet some people react with fear and others even think that that the arrival of these refugees will threaten the culture of Christianity in Europe. What is your message to those

who fear such a situation arising, and what is your message to Sweden, which, after a long tradition of welcoming refugees, is now starting to close its own borders?

Pope Francis:

First of all, as an Argentinean and South American, I am deeply grateful to Sweden for its openness, because during the period of the military dictatorships many Argentineans, Chileans and Uruguayans found a welcome in Sweden. Sweden has a long tradition of welcoming others. Not only accepting them, but integrating them, finding them housing, schools, employment... integrating them into the population. I was told the number – I may be mistaken, I am not certain – (*aside*) how many inhabitants are there in Sweden? Nine million? Of these 9 million – I was told – 850,000 would be “new Swedes”, that is, immigrants or refugees or their children. That is the first thing. Second, we have to distinguish between migrants and refugees, right? Migrants must be treated according to certain rules because migrating is a right, albeit a right which is highly regulated. On the other hand, being a refugee is the result of situations of war, suffering, hunger, terrible situations, and the refugee’s status calls for great attention, greater effort. Here too, Sweden has been exemplary in settling refugees, helping them to learn the language, the culture, and integrating them into its culture. As far as this aspect of integrating into the culture is concerned, we should not be fearful, because Europe was formed by a constant integration of cultures, many cultures... I believe that – and here I certainly do not mean to give offence – today in Iceland, Icelanders, with today’s Icelandic language, can read their own classics from a thousand years ago without any real difficulty; this shows that it is a country that has experienced little immigration, few of those “waves” that Europe experienced. Europe has been formed by migrations... Beyond this, what do I think of countries that close their frontiers? I think that, in theory, hearts must not be closed to refugees, but those who govern need prudence. They must be very open to receiving refugees, but they also have to calculate how best to settle them, because refugees must not only be accepted, but also integrated. Consequently, if a country has, say, the ability to integrate twenty persons, they should do this. Another country that has greater capacity should do more. But always with an open heart: it is not human to close the door, it is not human to close the heart, and in the long run, a price is paid for this. Here, the price is political, just as a political price can be paid for an imprudent judgement, for accepting more than can be integrated. What is the danger when refugees or migrants – and this applies to everybody – are not integrated? They become a ghetto. A culture that does not develop in relationship with another culture, this is dangerous. I think that fear is the worst counsellor of countries that tend to close their borders, while the best counsellor is prudence. I talked with an official of the Swedish government these days, and he told me of some difficulties they are presently facing – and this has to do with your last question – some difficulties because so many are arriving that there is no time to make provision for them, so that they can find schools, homes, employment, and learn the language. Prudence has to make this calculation. But Sweden... I do not believe that if Sweden lessens its ability to receive, it does so for selfish reasons or because it has lost that capacity. If something of the sort happens, it is for the last reason I mentioned. Today many people look to

Sweden because they are aware of its openness, but there is not enough time to settle them all. I don't know if this answers your question. Thank you.

Greg Burke:

Thank you, Holy Father. Now a question from Swedish Television: Anna Cristina Kappelin, of Sveriges TV.

Anna Cristina Kappelin:

Good afternoon. Sweden, which has hosted this important ecumenical meeting, has a woman at the head of its own Church. What do you think about this? Is it realistic to think of women priests in the Catholic Church in the next few decades? If not, why not? Do Catholic priests worry about the competition?

Pope Francis:

Reading the history of this area where we have been, I saw that there was one queen who was widowed three times; and I said: "There was a strong woman!" I was told that Swedish women are very strong, very able, and this is why some Swedish men look for women of other nationalities. I do not know if this is true! ... As for the ordination of women in the Catholic Church, the last clear word was given by Saint John Paul II, and this holds. Concerning competition, I do not know....

[a further question by the same journalist, out of audio range]

Pope Francis:

If we read carefully the statement made by Saint John Paul II, it is along those lines. Yes. But women can do many things better than men. Also in the dogmatic context – to clarify matters and perhaps to shed some more light and not simply to refer to a document... In Catholic ecclesiology there are two dimensions: the *Petrine* or apostolic dimension –Peter and the college of the Apostles, which is that of the pastoral ministry of the bishops – and the *Marian* dimension, which is the feminine dimension of the Church. I have mentioned this more than once. I ask myself, who is more important in theology and in the mystery of the Church: the Apostles or Mary, on the day of Pentecost? It is Mary! And more: the Church is a woman. We speak of the Church as "she", not "it". She, the Church. The Church is the bride of Jesus Christ. It is a nuptial mystery. In the light of this mystery, we understand why there are these two dimensions: the Petrine or episcopal dimension and the Marian dimension, including everything involving the motherhood of the Church, in the deepest sense. The Church does not exist without this fundamental feminine dimension, because she herself is feminine.

Greg Burke:

Thank you. Now a question from Austen Ivereigh, I don't know if he speaks Spanish or Porteño...; and perhaps Eva Fernandez can come closer...

Austin Ivereigh (in Spanish):

Thank you, Holy Father. This autumn has been marked by many ecumenical meetings with the traditional Churches: Orthodox, Anglican, and now the Lutheran Church. Yet the majority of Protestants in the world today are part of the Evangelical, Pentecostal tradition... I understand that on the Vigil of Pentecost next year there will be an event at Circus Maximus to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Charismatic Renewal. You have had many initiatives – perhaps a first for a Pope – in 2014 with Evangelical leaders. What happened with those initiatives, and what is it you hope to achieve at the meeting next year? Thank you.

Pope Francis (in Spanish):

With these initiatives... I would say there were two kinds of initiative. One was when I went to the charismatic church in Caserta and along the same lines when I was in Turin and visited the Waldensian church. It was an initiative of reparation and to ask forgiveness because Catholics... part of the Catholic Church, did not act in a Christian way towards them. There it was necessary to ask for forgiveness and for wounds to be healed. The other initiative was dialogue, and this began in Buenos Aires. There, for example, we had meetings at Luna Park, which can hold 7,000 people. Three meetings of Evangelicals and Catholics in the context of the Charismatic Renewal, but also open... Events that lasted all day: a pastor would preach, an Evangelical bishop, a Catholic priest or bishop, alternating. During two of these meetings, perhaps in all three, although I am not sure, Father Cantalamessa, the preacher of the papal household, preached. I think that this was something from previous pontificates, and my own time in Buenos Aires, and this benefitted us. We also had three day spiritual retreats for pastors and priests together, preached also by pastors and a priest or bishop. This proved helpful in the areas of dialogue, understanding, closeness, and work...above all work with those most in need. Together. And with great respect. This has to do with the initiatives that started in Buenos Aires; here in Rome I had some meetings with pastors...two or three so far. Some came from the United States and others from here in Europe. You mentioned about the celebration organized by the ICCRS [International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services], the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Charismatic Renewal, which was ecumenical from the outset, and so it will be ecumenical in that sense... It will be celebrated in the Circus Maximus. I am due – if God lets me live that long – to give a talk there. I believe the event will last two days, but it is not yet organized. I know that it will be on the Vigil of Pentecost, and that I will address the event at some point. Concerning the Charismatic Renewal and regarding the Pentecostals: the word "Pentecostal", the name "Pentecostal", is today ambiguous, because it covers many things: many groupings, many ecclesial communities that are not the

same, and sometimes even opposed. So it has to be clarified. The term has become so common as to be ambiguous. This is the case in Brazil, where it is widespread. The Charismatic Renewal was born – and one of its first opponents in Argentina was the very person who is speaking to you – because I was provincial of the Jesuits in that period when it got started there, and I prohibited Jesuits from getting involved. I also stated publicly that when there was a liturgical celebration, it had to be a liturgy and not a samba school. I said that. Today I believe the contrary, when things are well done. In Buenos Aires, once every year we celebrated Mass in the cathedral for the Charismatic Renewal Movement, and everyone came. In other words, I came to recognize the good that has come from the Renewal. And here we cannot forget the great figure, Cardinal Suenens, who had that prophetic and ecumenical vision.

Greg Burke:

Thank you, Holy Father. Now Eva Fernández of the Network “Cope”, for Spanish Radio.

Eva Fernández (in Spanish):

Holy Father, I would like to ask you this question in Italian but I am not yet able to do so. Not so long ago, you were with Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela. What impression did you have of this meeting and what do you think about the beginning of the talks? Thank you, Holy Father.

Pope Francis:

Yes, the President of Venezuela requested a meeting because he was returning from the Middle East, from Qatar, from the Emirates, and had a stopover in Rome. He had asked for a meeting earlier. He came in 2013 and then requested another meeting, but he was indisposed and unable to come. He asked for this meeting. When a President asks, he or she is received, and all the more so because he was in Rome, in transit. I listened to him for half an hour during that meeting; I listened to him, and I asked some questions and heard his thoughts. It is always good to hear all points of view. I listened to his. With regard to the second thing, dialogue. It is the only path for all conflicts! For all conflicts. Either we dialogue or we end up shouting at one another; there is no other way. I put my whole heart into dialogue and I believe that this has to be the way forward. I don't know what the outcome will be. I don't know, because it is very complicated, but the people involved in the dialogue are important political leaders. Zapatero, who has twice been President of the Government of Spain, and Restrepo [a Colombian politician, and all the parties] asked for the Holy See to be present in the talks. The Holy See designated the Nuncio in Argentina, Archbishop Tscherrig, who, I believe, is presently there at the negotiation table. A dialogue aimed at negotiation is the only way to resolve conflicts, there is no other way... if the Middle East had done this, how many lives would have been spared! [Note: at the first meeting Archbishop Tscherrig stood in for Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, who was appointed to be present at the negotiations].

Greg Burke:

Thank you, Holy Father. Now we have Mathilde Imberty of “Radio France”.

Mathilde Imberty:

Your Holiness, we are returning from Sweden, a very secularized country. Secularization is a phenomenon affecting Europe in general. Even in a country like France, it is estimated that in coming years a majority of citizens will have no religion. In your opinion, is secularization inevitable? Who is responsible for this, “lay” governments or the Church, which is perhaps too timid? Thank you.

Pope Francis:

Inevitable, no. I don't believe in inevitability! Who is responsible? I couldn't say... it is a process... First, though, I would say one thing. Pope Benedict XVI spoke often and clearly on this subject. When faith becomes lukewarm, it is, as you say, because the Church has grown weak... the times are very secularized... But let's look at France, for example, at the times when the court became worldly: when priests were court priests... a clerical functionalism... What was missing was the force of evangelization, the power of the Gospel. It is always the case that, when secularization occurs, we can also see a weakening in evangelization, this is true... But there is another process, a cultural process, a process – I think I mentioned this once – where human beings receive the world from God in order to cultivate it, to make it grow, to exercise dominion over it. But at a certain point they come to see themselves as masters of that culture – we think of the story of the tower of Babel – so much so that they end up creating another culture, their own culture, and thus take the place of God the Creator. In the process of secularization, I believe that sooner or later one ends up sinning against the Creator. Man (comes to consider himself) sufficient unto himself. This is not a problem of secularity, because a healthy secularity is desirable, a sound autonomy of worldly realities, of the sciences, of thought, of politics. A healthy secularity is desirable. But a secularity such as the one we inherited from the Enlightenment is another thing entirely. I think that these two things enter in: man's sense of self-sufficiency, as the creator of culture yet passing beyond this to the point of seeing himself as God, and to some extent a weakness in evangelization, which becomes lukewarm, and Christians themselves become lukewarm. What can save us is the restoration of a healthy autonomy in the development of culture and the sciences, but also a sense of our dependence, as creatures, not God, and a renewed commitment to evangelization. Nowadays I believe that this secularization is very powerful in some cultures. It makes itself felt in various kinds of worldliness, spiritual worldliness. When spiritual worldliness enters the Church, it is the worst of all. These are not my words, but those of Cardinal de Lubac, one of the great theologians of the Council. He said when the Church is affected by spiritual worldliness, there is nothing worse... It is the worst thing that can happen, even worse that what took place in the time of the corrupt Popes. He mentioned some ways the Popes were corrupt, I

don't really remember, but there were many. Worldliness. For me, this is the danger. And at the risk of this answer sounding like a sermon, I will say this: when Jesus prayed for all of us at the Last Supper, he asked one thing of the Father for all of us – not to take us away out of the world but to defend us from the world, namely from worldliness. It is extremely dangerous; it is a kind of secularization, all dressed up, *prêt-à-porter*, in the life of the Church. I don't know if this helps to answer...

Greg Burke:

Thank you, Holiness. Now Jürgen Erbacher of ZDF, German Television.

Jürgen Erbacher:

Your Holiness, a few days ago you met the *Santa Marta Group*, which is involved in combating modern slavery and human trafficking, issues which in my mind are very close to your heart, not only as Pope, but even earlier in Buenos Aires, where you were involved in these areas. Why? Was there a particular experience, even a personal one? And, as a German, at the beginning of the year commemorating the Reformation, I must ask if you will come to the country where the Reformation began five hundred years ago, perhaps during this year?

Pope Francis:

Let me begin with the second question. The programme of next year's visits has not been drawn up. It is almost certain that I will visit India and Bangladesh, but the programme has not been drawn up, it remains a possibility. As for your first question, in Buenos Aires, as a priest, I had long been troubled by the flesh of Christ. By the fact that Christ continues to suffer, that Christ is continuously crucified in his weakest brothers and sisters. This has always moved me. I worked as a priest, doing little things with the poor, but not exclusively, and I worked with university students... Then, as bishop, in Buenos Aires we also undertook initiatives, also with groups of non-Catholics and non-believers, to combat slave labour, especially among the Latin-American migrants that continue to come to Argentina. Their passports are taken away and they are put to slave labour in the factories, but locked in. Once, one of these places caught fire and the children had been put on the roof; all of them died, along with others who were not able to escape... They were in fact slaves, and this made an impression on me. Trafficking in human persons. I also worked with two congregations of religious Sisters who work with prostitutes, slaves to prostitution. Once a year, all these slaves of the system had a Mass in *Plaza de la Constitución*, one of the places where trains arrive, like Termini. There Mass was celebrated with everyone. The Mass was attended by many organizations, the Sisters, and also groups of non-believers, with whom we worked. We do the same work here. Here in Italy, many groups of volunteers are combatting forms of enslavement in the workplace and among women. Some months ago, I visited one of these organizations, and the people... Here in Italy, volunteer work is quite effective. I wasn't really

expecting this. It is a very beautiful thing about Italy, its volunteer work. And this is due to parish priests. Parish oratories and volunteer work are two things that came about because of the apostolic zeal of Italian parish priests. I don't know if this answers your question...

Greg Burke:

Thank you Holiness. They are telling us that if we want to eat, we have to go.

Pope Francis:

Thank you again for your questions. Thank you. Pray for me. And enjoy your lunch!