



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO CHILE AND PERU
(15-22 JANUARY 2018)

PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE RETURN FLIGHT FROM LIMA TO ROME

Papal flight
Sunday, 21 January 2018

[Multimedia]

Greg Burke:

Holy Father, thank you. Thank you for the time you are giving us this evening, after a long and intense trip, which at times has been a little hot and humid. It has been a fruitful trip, during which you have touched people's hearts, the holy and faithful People of God, with a message of peace and hope. You also confronted the challenges facing the Church in Chile and the Church in Peru, as well as those of the two societies, with particular attention to human dignity and the indigenous people of Amazonia. Thank you for the opportunity to accompany you so closely. Now we would like to examine a little more the themes of your visit.

Pope Francis:

Good evening. Thank you for your work. It has been a trip... I do not know how you say this is Italian, but in Spanish it is "*pasteurizado*", like the process used for milk: it goes from cold to hot, and then hot to cold. We have gone from the South of Chile, cold, that beautiful landscape, to the desert, then to the forest of Maldonado, then to Trujillo, the sea, and then to Lima. We have experienced every temperature and climate. It has been demanding. Thank you very much. And now, your questions.

Greg Burke:

To begin, we have questions from Peru and from Chile. First we have Armando Cancianga.

Pope Francis:

I ask all of you to begin with questions regarding the trip. When we finish your questions, if there is anything else to be said about the trip I will bring it up. Then I will take other questions, if there are any.

Armando Canchanya Alaya [Rpp of Peru]:

Holy Father... I want to thank you for allowing us to join you on this trip... On the outbound flight you said that you did not know Peru well, and during these days you have had the opportunity to visit three cities... I wanted to ask you about this visit where the people came to see you and even said affectionately: "Panchito, do not go"... What does the Holy Father take away from this trip, from Peru?

Pope Francis:

I take away the impression of a people of believers, a people that is experiencing many difficulties and has experienced them throughout their history. But it was the faith that impressed me... Not only the faith in Trujillo where popular piety is abundant and strong, but the faith in the streets... You saw what the streets were like... And not only in Lima where you saw it clearly, but also in Trujillo. The same in Puerto Maldonado. I thought the ceremony would take place in a place like this, a square filled with people, but wherever I went, the streets were also filled with people... a people who came out to express their joy and their faith. It is true, as I said today at midday, that you are a land of saints; you are the Latin American people who have the most saints. And important saints too: Turibius, Rose, Martin, Juan. I think there is deep faith in this land.

I am leaving Peru with an impression of joy, faith, hope, renewed energy, and, above all, many young people. Once again I saw what I witnessed in the Philippines and Colombia. As I passed by, mothers and fathers held up their children, and this speaks of the future and of hope because no one brings children into the world unless they have hope. I only ask that you care for all this richness, not only that found in Churches and museums, though works of art are wonderful, and not only that born of your history of holiness and the sufferings which have greatly enriched you, but also the richness that I experienced in these days.

Giovanni Hinojosa [*La Republica*]:

Your Holiness, in Peru the political class has let the people down, through corruption and by

buying and selling pardons. But so have some members of the Church. You only have to look at the victims of the *Sodalitium Christianae Vitae* who are waiting for justice. How do you respond to both cases?

Pope Francis:

Well, first the problem of corruption... I would not know how to answer in historical terms about corruption in other areas of the world. I know that in some countries in Europe there is a great deal of corruption – in some, but not all. True, in Latin America there are many instances of corruption. Today it is popular to speak of Odebrecht, for example... but that is just one case. The origin of corruption... I would say is original sin that leads you... I wrote a very brief book once, called *Corrupción y pecado*, where my basic point was: “sinner yes, corrupt no”. We are all sinners... But I know that all of us who are here – I for my part too and I like to think you do yours. When we are out of bounds because of a serious sin, for example, when we say “that is wrong; I am behaving badly with a friend, or I have stolen, or I have done this or that, or taken drugs”, and then I stop and try not to do it again. Fine, God’s forgiveness enters into play. I am not afraid of sin; I am afraid of corruption, because corruption traps your body and soul. Corrupt people are so sure of themselves that they cannot turn back. Corruption is like a mire, quicksand, that step into and get pulled in deeper, and deeper into it, and it swallows you. It is a morass.... Yes, it is the destruction of the human person. I do not know if I have answered your question, or if there is something else you wish to ask about corruption.

Then I will move on to the *Sodalitium*. It is clear that politicians have a great deal of power... Business persons also have a lot of power. An employer who pays his workers only half their wage is corrupt. Housewives who are accustomed, and think it acceptable, to exploit domestic staff either through their salary or the way they treat them, are corrupt, because they think this is normal. I remember a conversation I once had with a person, a professional. He was young, must have been about 30 years old. He told me that he did not treat the domestic staff in a proper way, and he mentioned the things he did with them. I told him: “But... you cannot do that. This is a sin!” – “Father”, he told me, “we cannot compare these people to me; that’s what these people are there for”. This is how the sex trafficker thinks, the trafficker in slave labour. They are corrupt.

Is there corruption in the Church? Yes. There are cases of corruption in the Church. There always have been in the history of the Church. There always have been and why? Because men and women of the Church enter into this game of corruption. This brings me to the *Sodalitium*... The *Sodalitium* [scandal] started with a person who seemed very virtuous; he died and it was discovered that he had led a double life. It is the first case I know of in the *Sodalitium*. But this happened 20 or 25 years ago, and after an accusation of abuse, not only of sexual abuse, but abuse by the manipulation of consciences, with regard to the founder... This process against the founder came to the Holy See, and he was sentenced. He was not expelled from the *Sodalitium*,

but he lives alone and one person attends him. He claims he is innocent of the charges proved at his trial, and he has appealed to the Apostolic Signatura, which is the Vatican's Supreme Court of Justice. The case is in appeal... From what I understand, the sentence will be issued within a month... The process has taken a year. In less than a month, the decision will come out.

But, what is happening now? The trial led other victims of the founder to bring suit in civil and ecclesiastical courts, so it no longer much difference for the Apostolic Signatura to render judgment in the first case, for or against, because now there are far more serious cases against this man, which will have to be adjudicated. These are a number of serious cases... civil justice has intervened, which, in abuse cases like this, is always appropriate, because it is [people's] right. And, as far as I know, but I am not quite certain, the case is rather unfavourable to the founder...

On the other hand it was not only a personal situation... some things there were not entirely clear... Then, almost two years ago I sent Cardinal Tobin, the Archbishop of Newark, as a Visitor to the *Sodalitium*. During the Cardinal's visit, he discovered some things that did not make sense or that were not clear, and so he named two financial auditors. This is the third abuse that also involved the founder, economic management. After the study, the Cardinal recommended that the *Sodalitium* be subjected to external administration... the letter arrived from him four weeks ago, the case was studied, and an administrator was appointed two weeks ago... This is the reason why the *Sodalitium* is presently being supervised by the Holy See...

A similar case – similar in the sense of the new procedures, not the charges – is the one involving the Legionaries; it was already resolved at the time by Pope Benedict XVI who was very firm and determined in that situation. Benedict did not tolerate these things. I learned from him not to tolerate them either. I do not know if this answers your question... The legal status of the *Sodalitium* today is that it is in "receivership" and, at the same time, the Apostolic Visitation continues.

Juan Pablo Iglesias, [La Tercera]:

Good evening, Holy Father, and thank you for this chance to ask you some questions about the journey. Your first message in Chile was quite harsh in condemning sexual abuse. You spoke about "shame" and you spoke about understanding the pain of the victims, but on the final day, in your statement about Bishop Barros, you also said something that, in the end, seemed to suggest that victims could be guilty of falsehood or slander. Is that because you believe the word of Bishop Barros over that of the victims? Does this not betray to some extent the trust in those victims that you yourself called for in Chile?

Pope Francis:

I understand the question. I made only one statement about Barros, not several. I spoke in Chile, in Iquique, at the end. In Chile, I spoke twice about sexual abuse: forcefully before the government, which meant before the entire country, and in the cathedral, with the priests. What I said to the priests is what I feel most deeply about the matter. You know that Pope Benedict began with zero tolerance, I continued with zero tolerance, and, after almost five years as Pope, I have not signed a request for pardon.

This is how the process works. The cases come to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation issues the sentence... In cases of removal from the clerical state, the verdict in the first instance is definitive; the convicted person has the right to appeal. There is an appellate court in second instance. The appellate court knows that if there is clear proof of abuse, then there is no room for appeal; there can be no appeal. What can be appealed are the proceedings: procedural errors, irregularities. So in that case, a sentence must be issued or reviewed, as in every judgment, is that clear? If the second instance confirms the first, there is only one recourse left to the individual, and that is yo appeal to the Pope for clemency.

In these five years, I have received – I don't recall the exact number – perhaps twenty or twenty-five cases in which they were prompted to request clemency. I signed none of them. Only in one case, which was not a request for clemency but an issue about the sentence; it was the first year of my pontificate, and I had to consider two sentences. One was very serious, coming from the diocese, and another from the [Congregation for] the Doctrine the Faith. The Doctrine the Faith's was the harsher of the two; the one from the diocese was very serious, very circumspect and provisional; that is, it had conditions: you had to wait and see. In other words, the case wasn't closed. As must be done in good jurisprudence, always in favour of the offender, I opted for the lighter sentence with the conditions. After two years, it was deemed that the conditions had not been satisfied, and so I let the other sentence take effect. That is the only case in which I had doubt, but it was because there were two sentences and there is a legal principle, *in dubio pro reo*. Is that clear? So I opted for the latter. That is my position.

Now, the case of Bishop Barros. It is a case where I called for an examination, an investigation, which was thorough. Really, there is no evidence – I use the word “evidence”, because later I want to talk about “proof” – there is no evidence of guilt, nor does it appear that there will be any, because there is consistency on the other side. So it's on the basis of this lack of evidence that I am waiting for some evidence to make me change my position; otherwise I apply the basic rule of every court of law: *nemo malus nisi probetur*, no one is guilty until proven otherwise. Then there is the word “proof”, which I think is what got me in hot water.

On my way in, a journalist from Iquique asked me: “In Chile we have the big issue regarding Bishop Barros; what do you think about it?” I think these were the words I used, but first I thought: should I answer or not? I decided to answer. Why? Because Barros had been the bishop of Iquique and a member of his flock was asking me about this. She has the right to an answer. So I

said: “The day I have proof, I will speak”. I think I said: “I don’t have proof”. I think so, but I don’t remember. But it is on record, you can find it.

I would speak of “evidence”. Of course I realize that there are many victims of abuse who can offer no proof. They have none, and there simply isn’t any. Sometimes they have proof, but are ashamed to bring it forward and so they suffer in silence. The tragedy of these victims is dreadful, dreadful. Two months ago I attended to a woman who was abused forty years ago – forty years ago! She is married with three children. That woman did not receive communion from that time on, because in the hand of the priest she saw the hand of her abuser. She couldn’t approach [to receive communion], and she was a believer, she was a Catholic. She couldn’t... So, to talk about “proof” was not the best way to deal with a pain-filled heart; instead, I would speak of “evidence”... The Barros case was examined and reexamined, but there is no evidence. That is what I wanted to say. I don’t have the evidence needed to convict. And if I were to convict without evidence and without moral certitude, I would myself commit the offense of judicial misconduct.

But there it is one more thing I would like to say. One of you came up to me and said: “Did you see the letter that came out?”, and showed me a letter that I had written several years ago, when the Barros case started. I need to explain that letter, because it too defends the prudence with which the Barros issue was handled. That letter is not the account of a specific fact; that letter is the account of what happened over a period of about ten or twelve months.

When the Karadima scandal broke out – and we all know the scandal associated with that man – we began to see how many priests trained by Karadima had been abused or were themselves abusers. In Chile, there are four bishops whom Karadima had sent to the seminary. Someone from the episcopal conference suggested that these bishops – three of them, since the fourth was quite ill and did not have a diocesan assignment, but three of them did – that perhaps it would be better that these bishops should step down, offer their resignation and take a sabbatical year and then, once the storm had passed... to avoid accusations, because these are fine bishops, good bishops. Like Barros: at that point, Barros had already been a bishop for twenty years. He was about to finish as military ordinary, because earlier he had been auxiliary bishop in Valparaiso, then bishop of Iquique and then military ordinary for almost ten years. [Some] said: “Let’s ask for his resignation, perhaps explaining to him...” And [Barros] generously offered his resignation. He came to Rome, and I said: “No. That’s not how it works. Because that would be an admission of guilt. In all cases, if there are guilty parties, an investigation has to be made”. So I refused his resignation.

Those were the ten months in which the letter was written. Then, when Barros was named [to Osorno], this whole protest movement got started and he offered me his resignation a second time. I said: “No, you go [to Osorno]”. I spoke with him at length, as did others: “Go [to Osorno]”. And you know what happened there, the day of his taking possession and all the rest. The Barros investigation continued, but no evidence emerged. That is why... That is all I wanted to say. I

cannot convict him, because I have no evidence; but I am also convinced that he is innocent.

And now, a third point – I have explained clearly about the letter and how things went – now, I will go on to a third point: how victims of abuse feel. Here I must apologize, because the word “proof” caused so much pain for so many victims of abuse. “What do I have to do, get a certificate of this?” No. The word “proof” had to do with a legal principle and it caused pain, and I beg their pardon if I unwittingly hurt them, I had no intention of doing so. I myself am hurt by this, because I regularly meet with them; in Chile I met with two of them, as everyone knows, and there were others whom I met with privately. In Peru, no. But on every one of my visits, there are always opportunities. The names of those I met in Philadelphia were published, two or three others were made public; other cases were not. I know how much they suffer. To hear the Pope tell them, “Bring me a letter with proof”, is a slap in the face. I now realize that my way of expressing myself was unfortunate, because that is not what I was thinking. And I understand – as the apostle Peter says in one of his letters – the fire that broke out. This is what I can tell you in all sincerity. Barros will remain there unless I find a way to convict him. I cannot convict him unless I have – I will not say proof – unless I have evidence. And there are many ways to come up with evidence. Is that clear? Good!

They are telling me that after all the turbulence of Barros and the Sodalitium, we now have some of a more meteorological nature! I would like to stay here. If it is all right with you, we can continue without looking at one another, as we are seated, so as not to waste time. Because then dinner will arrive and they will cut off the press conference. They say that “angels have no back”: we shall see... I will remain standing unless there is turbulence; in that case, I will sit down.

Greg Burke:

Let's stay in Chile with Matilde Burgos from CNN Chile.

Matilde Burgos [CNN Chile]:

Thank you very much, Holiness, for visiting our country. I see that you want the Barros case to be quite clearly understood, so before I ask my question, I'd like to clear up one thing: “For you, why is a victim's testimony not “evidence”? Why do you not believe them?” The second question is: “To what do you attribute the fact that your visit to Chile is being considered as a failure of the faithful and a failure of the Church, which appears more divided?”

Pope Francis:

The victims' testimony is always evidence. Always. In the case of Barros there isn't any... there is no evidence... It started perhaps with that bad decision about the resignation and then accusations began. But in regard to abuse, there is no evidence...

Matilde Burgos:

of covering up abuse...

Pope Francis:

Yes, of covering up; it's abuse just the same. In other words, hiding abuse is itself an abuse. There is no evidence. That's why the best thing is that when one thinks it is so, they should offer the evidence at once. If they honestly think this is the case. At this time I do not think that it is the case, since there isn't any [evidence]; still, I keep an open mind to receiving any.

And the other business, about Chile, is farfetched. I am returning from Chile happy. I did not expect so many people in the streets – we didn't pay an entrance fee for them; those people were not paid to come or bused in – the spontaneity with which Chileans express themselves was impressive, even in Iquique, which I thought was going to be a very small event because Iquique is desert country. You saw all the people who came out! In the south, too, the same thing. And the streets of Santiago spoke for themselves.

I think the responsibility of reporters is to deal with concrete facts. And this business of a people divided, I don't know where that comes from. This is the first time I am hearing about it. Maybe this Barros case is what brought it about, but putting it in the larger context, this might be why. But the impression I got is that [my visit to Chile] went very well and was gratifying, and very intense... Later I would like to come back, at least for a moment, to what moved me the most about Chile, but first to move on to other topics if we have time...

Greg Burke:

We move to the Italian group, to Andrea Tornielli:

Andrea Tornielli [La Stampa]:

Holiness, I wanted to speak about what you said yesterday in Amazonia, because in that speech there was also, in fact, a new element, that is, not only the threat represented by the powerful economic entities, but also the threat – indeed, you talked about a “distortion” – of certain environmental policies that end up strangling people's lives. So, is there an environmentalism that is anti-human?

Pope Francis:

Yes. In that region, I can't explain it well at this moment, but [there is the idea of] protecting the forest in order to save a few tribes who are then left on the outside, and the forest ends up being

exploited. The most concrete data in this case are the statistics coming from that region. That's where I think you will certainly find the clearest data. It is a phenomenon that, in order to protect the environment, ends up by isolating [people], cutting them off from true progress. A phenomenon that has been verified there, in that region, and in the information they sent me in preparation for this visit, which I studied. Thank you.

Greg Burke:

And now to Aura Miguel, of Rádio Renascença.

Aura Miguel [Rádio Renascença]:

Holiness, my question has to do with the celebration of the marriage on the plane. From now on, what would you say to parish priests and bishops when an engaged couple comes and asks to be married somewhere, on the beach, in a park, a ship, a plane... What would you say?

Pope Francis:

Imagine: wedding cruises! That would be... One of you told me that I am crazy to do these things. The matter was simple. The man was on the previous flight; she was not there. I spoke with him... Afterwards, I realized that he was sounding me out: he spoke about life, [asked] what I thought about life, about family life; he spoke; we had a good chat. Then, the following day, both of them were there, and when we took photographs, they said this to me: "We were about to get married in Church, we had the civil ceremony; but the day before" – they were from a small town – "the Church collapsed in an earthquake and the wedding never took place". That was ten years ago, eight maybe: the earthquake was in 2010, eight years ago. "Yes, let's do it tomorrow, then, the day after tomorrow... Life's like this; then a daughter arrived, then another... But we always knew in our hearts: we are not married".

I questioned them a bit, and their answers were clear: "For our whole life long..." – "And how do you know these things? You remember your catechism well..." – "No, we did marriage preparation courses at the time". They had been prepared. You could tell the parish priests that this couple had been prepared, and I judged them prepared. So, they asked me to do this; the sacraments are for people. All the conditions were clear. And why not do today what can be done today, and not put it off to tomorrow, a tomorrow which perhaps would mean eight or ten years more? This is the answer. I considered them prepared, that they knew what they were doing. They each made their preparation before the Lord with the sacrament of Penance, and then I married them. And when they got here, it was all done...

They told me they had told one of you: "We are going to ask the Pope to marry us". I don't know if that was the case, or whether or not that they had that intention. That is how it happened. But

you can tell the parish priests that the Pope questioned them thoroughly; and then when they told me they had done the course... But they were aware; they were aware that they were in an irregular situation. Thank you.

Greg Burke:

Your Holiness, we've been going for an hour now, and I'm not sure if we still have time for one or two more questions...

Pope Francis:

Yes, but about the visit.

Greg Burke:

Yes, about the visit. Nicole Winfield, Associated Press.

Pope Francis:

Yes, because we have said almost nothing about Peru.

Nicole Winfield:

No, still about Chile...

Pope Francis:

All right.

Nicole Winfield [Associated Press]:

Holy Father, yesterday Cardinal O'Malley made a statement about your comments on Bishop Barros; he said that such words are "a source of great pain for survivors of abuse" and can make them feel "abandoned" and "discredited". You told us that you felt badly about this... I can imagine that, and I would ask if the actual words of Cardinal O'Malley made you understand this pain? And then, another question related to this, about the Commission for the Protection of Minors headed by Cardinal O'Malley: the terms of the original members of this Commission expired a month ago; there are people who see this and wonder if it is a sign that the protection of minors is not a priority...

Pope Francis:

I understand. I have seen Cardinal O'Malley's statement. He also said that the Pope has always defended [the victims], the Pope has zero tolerance...."

[My] infelicitous expression led to the situation you mentioned, and this made me think about the word "proof"...

Nicole Winfield:

Also, slander...

Pope Francis:

...slander. When, lacking evidence, one insists with tenacity that you did this or that, that that so-and-so did such-and-such a thing, that is slander. If I say, "You are a thief, you stole something", [and you say,] "No, I didn't steal anything..." [and I continue to say:] "You're a thief, you've stolen something...", then I am slandering, because I have no evidence.

Nicole Winfield:

But the victims are saying this.

Pope Francis:

But I haven't heard from any victim of Barros...

Nicole Winfield:

There are victims of Karadima who say that Barros...

Pope Francis:

No one has come forward, they haven't provided any evidence for a judgment. This is all a bit vague, it's something that can't be accepted. You, in all good will, tell me that there are victims, but I haven't seen any, because they haven't come forward. It's true that Barros was a member of the group of young people there; I'm not sure when Barros entered the seminary, but he's been a bishop now for twenty-four or twenty-three years, and must have been a priest for fifteen years... For many years: he entered [the seminary] when he was very young. He says he saw nothing. He was part of the group, but then he took another path. We have to be clear about this: anyone who accuses without evidence, pertinaciously, this is slander.

But if anyone can give me evidence, I'll be the first to listen. We have to be fair in this matter, very

fair. I have given thought to what Cardinal O'Malley said, and I thank him for his statement because it was very fair. He mentioned everything that I've done and am still doing, and what the Church is doing, and then he spoke about the pain of victims, not in this case, but in general. Because, as I said earlier, there are many victims who aren't able, because of shame or whatever reason, to come forward with a document, testimony... This is the issue.

And your second question was...?

Greg Burke:

The Commission...

Pope Francis:

The Commission. The Commission, yes, it was appointed for three years, I believe. That term has now expired; preparations were made for the new Commission, and they, the Commission itself, decided to renew the mandate of one part and, for another, to appoint new [members]. The Tuesday before we left –for this visit –the definitive list of the Commission arrived, and it is now passing through the normal process of the Curia. There were some observations about the members, which will need to be clarified, because the *curriculum vitae* of the new members has to be studied, as has been done. There were two observations that had to be clarified... But on this point Cardinal O'Malley has worked well, the Commission has worked as it should... No, no please, do not think that... the time schedule is normal in the case of such appointments...

Greg Burke:

Your Holiness, one last question. If it is about the visit...

Catherine Marciano [AFP]:

Your Holiness, one of the aims of the Church is to fight against poverty. In twenty years, Chile has lowered the poverty level from forty percent to eleven percent. Do you think this is the result of a liberal policy, is there liberalism in your opinion? And with regard to Cardinal Maradiaga... What do you think of the news about finances in his regard?

Pope Francis:

On Cardinal Maradiaga... the question does not have to do with the visit, but I will answer it. He made a filmed statement, there is a video, and I say what he said.

Regarding liberalism, I would say that we must thoroughly study the cases of liberal policies.

There are other countries in Latin America with liberal policies that have brought greater poverty to the country. There I really do not know what to say, since I am not an expert, but, in general, a liberal policy that does not involve all the people is selective and leads to decline. But this is a general rule. I am really not familiar enough with the case of Chile to be able to answer. But we see that in other countries in Latin America things are increasingly on the decline.

About the visit, I would like to say something that I found very moving. The women's prison: my heart was there. I am always very sensitive to prisons and to prisoners and always, when I go to a prison, I ask myself, "Why them and not me...?" Seeing these women, the creativity of these women, their capacity to change, to change their lives, to get back into society with the strength of the Gospel... One of you told me: "I saw the joy of the Gospel". This touched me, I was really very touched by that meeting. It is one of the most beautiful things about the visit.

Then, in Puerto Maldonado, the meeting with the native peoples, let's leave it be, since it's obvious that it was moving, it gives a sign to the world... On that day there was the first meeting of the Pre-Synodal Commission of the Synod for Amazonia that will take place in 2019. But I was moved by the "The Little Prince" Home: to see these children, the majority of them abandoned, those boys and girls who have been able, with education, to move forward... There are professionals, there... This moved me so much. The works that lift a person "up", as well as the things we spoke about earlier that bring a person "down". That aspect of the visit moved me so much. And then the people, the warmth of the people. Here today, in Lima, it was beyond belief! Beyond belief! The warmth of the people... I say: this people has faith and "infects" me with that faith, and I thank God for this.

I thank you for the work that awaits you, for the articles and news you must deliver. Thank you for your patience and thank you for asking clear questions. Thank you very much.

Greg Burke:

Your Holiness, thank you for your patience. Have a good rest, and a good dinner. Thank you.