

Audience with Pope Francis, Rome, Italy



On December 2, 2015, a group of Sisters from the Motherhouse participated in the Audience with the Pope. It was a cold morning, but we were excited to participate in this event – especially the language students who are going home soon.

When we noticed that the Christmas crib was already set up, even though we are still at the beginning of Advent, our eagerness increased even more. We were so happy to have this unique opportunity to contemplate the preparations for Christmas at the heart of the Church.

On our way to the Vatican Square, we wondered whether the Pope would be tired because of his recent trip to Africa. Instead, we saw his face full of happiness and vitality from the experience he had had. In his homily, he talked about the difficulties of the people who are from the suffering countries. But he emphasized the beautiful examples he saw in Africa; the faith, life and joy of the church.

Two things especially touched my heart. First, his words came from his heart. His eyes sparkled and his voice was vibrant. Many times he even did not read the text. He just talked to us. He shared his experience as the father of the Church, who went to Africa in our name and shared with us the fruits of the journey.

Secondly, while listening to the blessings in so many languages, I was reminded of the universality of the church and Jesus' teaching.

Again and again, the Pope underlined the grace of missionary life and asked, especially to the youth, not to be afraid to answer to Jesus, who calls people to be missionaries in Africa and in other places where Jesus and his Gospel are not proclaimed yet. Surely this experience marks the beginning of Advent and the opening of the Year of Mercy in a special way in our lives.

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