



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** *St Peter's Square*

Wednesday, 11 September 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Yesterday evening I returned from my [Apostolic Journey to Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius](#). I thank God that he allowed me to undertake this itinerary as a *pilgrim of peace and hope*, and I renew the expression of my gratitude to the respective Authorities of these States, as well as to the Episcopates, who invited and welcomed me with such affection and attention, and the Apostolic Nuncios who worked so hard for the success of this trip.

The hope of the world is Christ, and his Gospel is the most powerful leaven of fraternity, freedom, justice and peace for all peoples. With my visit, in the footsteps of holy evangelizers, I sought to bring this leaven, Jesus' leaven, to the peoples of Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius.

In *Mozambique* I went to sow seeds of hope, peace and reconciliation in a land that has suffered a great deal in the recent past due to a long armed conflict, and that was struck last spring by two cyclones that caused very serious damage. The Church continues to accompany the peace process, which actually took a step forward this past 1 August with a new Accord between the parties. And here I would like to pause to thank the Sant'Egidio Community that has worked so very, very much in this peace process.

I encouraged the [Authorities of the Country](#) in this regard, exhorting them to work together for the common good. And I encouraged the [young people, who had gathered from various religious affiliations](#), to build peace, by overcoming resignation and anxiety, spreading social friendship and holding dear the traditions of the elders. [To the bishops, priests and consecrated people, whom I met in the Cathedral of Maputo](#), dedicated to Mary Immaculate, I proposed the way of Nazareth, the way of the generous "yes" to God, in grateful remembrance of his call and of its very origins. A strong sign of this evangelical presence is the [Hospital of Zimpeto](#), on the outskirts of the capital, built thanks to the commitment of the Sant'Egidio Community. In this hospital I saw that what is most important are the sick, and that everyone works for the sick. Moreover, not everyone belongs

to the same religious confession. The hospital director is a woman, a researcher, a good woman who carries out aids research. She is Muslim, yet she is the director and this hospital was built by the Sant'Egidio Community. But all, everyone together for the people, are united like brothers and sisters. My visit to Mozambique culminated in the Mass celebrated in the great Stadium in the rain, but we were all happy. The hymns, the religious dances ... so much happiness. The rain did not matter. And there, the appeal of the Lord Jesus resonated: "Love your enemies" (Lk 6:27), the seed of true revolution, that of love, which extinguishes violence and creates fraternity.

From Maputo I travelled to Antananarivo, the capital of *Madagascar*. A country rich in beauty and natural resources, but marked by so much poverty. I expressed the hope that, enlivened by their traditional spirit of solidarity, the Madagascan people might overcome adversity and build a future of development, by combining respect for the environment and social justice. As a prophetic sign in this direction, I visited the "City of Friendship - Akamasoa", founded by a Lazarist missionary, Fr Pedro Opeka: there, efforts are made to unite work, dignity, care of the poorest, education for children — all animated by the Gospel. At Akamasoa, at the granite quarry, I raised to God the Prayer for Workers.

Then I had an encounter with contemplative nuns from various congregations, in the Carmelite monastery. Indeed, without faith and prayer one cannot build a city worthy of mankind. With the country's Bishops, we renewed the commitment to be "sowers of peace and hope", taking care of the People of God, especially the poor, and our presbyters. Together, we venerated Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo, the first Madagascan woman to be raised to the glory of the Altars. With the very numerous young people — many young people at that vigil, so very many — I experienced a vigil filled with witness, song and dance.

In Antananarivo the Sunday Eucharist was celebrated in the great "Diocesan Field": large crowds gathered around the Lord Jesus. And lastly at the Saint-Michel Institute, I met the priests, consecrated men and women and seminarians of Madagascar. It was an encounter in the spirit of praise to God.

Monday was dedicated to the visit to the Republic of *Mauritius*, a well known tourist destination which I chose because it is a place of integration among various ethnic groups and cultures. Indeed, throughout the last two centuries, different peoples have landed on that archipelago, especially from India. And after independence it experienced strong economic and social development. Interreligious dialogue is strong there, as is friendship among the leaders of the various religious confessions; something which could appear strange to us. However they experience friendship in this way, which is natural. When I entered the Bishopric, I found a beautiful, very beautiful bouquet of flowers: it was sent by the Grand Imam as a sign of brotherhood.

Holy Mass in Mauritius was celebrated at the Monument of Mary Queen of Peace, in memory of

Blessed Jacques-Désiré Laval, also known as “the Apostle of Mauritian unity”. In that context, the Gospel of the Beatitudes, the identity card of Christ’s disciples, is an antidote to the temptation to egotistical and discriminatory wellbeing. The Gospel and the Beatitudes are the antidote to this egotistical and discriminatory lifestyle, and also the leaven of true happiness steeped in mercy, justice and peace. I was struck by the Bishops’ ministry of evangelization to the poor. Later, during the encounter with Mauritian Authorities, I expressed my admiration for the commitment to harmonize differences into a common project. I encouraged them to continue, also in the present, to welcome, maintain and develop democratic life.

And so I arrived at the Vatican yesterday evening. Before beginning a journey and on its return, I always go to Our Lady, to the *Salus Populi Romani*, so that she may accompany me on the trip, as a Mother, and tell me what I must do, and take care of my words and my gestures. One is safe with Our Lady.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us give thanks to God and ask him that the seeds scattered on this Apostolic Journey may bear abundant fruits for the people of Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius. Thank you!

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Zimbabwe, India, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada and the United States of America. Upon you and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of the Lord. May God bless you!

I offer a special greeting to *young people*, the *elderly*, the *sick* and *newlyweds*. Tomorrow, we celebrate the Memorial of the Most Holy Name of Mary. I invite everyone to look to Our Lady and allow themselves to be inspired by her Christian sentiment, in order to live and imitate ever more her Son, Jesus. Thank you!