APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO URUGUAY, ARGENTINA AND PERU



Leo XIV in

Uruguay

All the addresses, homilies
and words of the Holy Father

augustinianswiththepope.com

DIGITAL EDITION · ENGLISH
6–8 NOV 2026

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

A pilgrimage that begins in Uruguay

Some journeys are measured in kilometres, others only in encounters. The one Leo XIV began on 6 November 2026 is both: twelve days, three countries — Uruguay, Argentina and Peru — and 31,003 kilometres of air travel, according to the Holy See Press Office.

It all began in the air. During the nearly 11,000-kilometre flight from Rome to Montevideo, the Pope sent messages of prayer and blessing to France, Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal and Brazil. He landed in the Uruguayan capital at 16:19 local time, and on board he had already told the journalists that from the very first day he had no doubt this journey had to go ahead.

This book gathers everything the Holy Father said in Uruguay between 6 and 8 November: eight texts, from the greeting to the journalists on the plane to the final words of thanks in Florida, before Our Lady of the Thirty-Three. There are the addresses and the homilies, and also the impromptu remarks — the ones that were not on the page.

For the Augustinian Family, this journey has a special flavour. The one speaking is the first Pope of the Order of Saint Augustine, whose motto, *In Illo uno unum*, reminds us that in the one Christ we are one.

> ***In Illo uno unum***
>
> IN THE ONE CHRIST WE ARE ONE.

And it shows. At Vespers in Montevideo, before consecrated men and women, the Pope recalled that the human heart ends up resembling what it loves, and left one of the keys of evangelization:

> **Dear brothers and sisters, one of the secrets of evangelization is to resemble the One whom we proclaim.**

At the Catholic University he quoted Saint Augustine expressly:

> **Saint Augustine reminds us that "the world has been filled with good reputation, for a good reputation is a sweet fragrance"** (Commentary on Saint John, Treatise 50, 7)**.**

And in Florida, before Our Lady of the Thirty-Three, he recalled Saint Monica, the mother who prayed for years for a son who seemed ever further from God.

The small Augustinian community in Uruguay lived the journey up close: five religious — four Brazilians and one Spaniard — who serve at the Santa Rita parish and school in Punta Gorda, a small presence with a history that goes back to 1932. The Pope smiled at them at Vespers and gave them 25 minutes of fraternal conversation at the Nunciature, where he gave them a rosary.

May these pages accompany you on your phone, on the road or before sleep, and help us live what the Pope's journey proposes: united in one heart and one soul, turned toward God.

THE AGUSTINOSCONELPAPA.COM EDITORIAL TEAM

The journey at a glance

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

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Rome–Montevideo flight

02 **A people on the move**
Plaza Independencia · Montevideo

03 **Where is our heart?**
Metropolitan Cathedral · Montevideo

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

04 **Bridges, palm groves and mate**
Paysandú

05 **“Go and do likewise”**
Parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe · Montevideo

06 **A walk through the five senses**
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07 **I announce to you a great joy!**
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SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER

08 **Faith is learned at home**
Juanicó and Florida

01

ROME–MONTEVIDEO FLIGHT

GREETING

Bound for Montevideo

Greeting to the journalists on the flight

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

> **I confess that from the first day I had no doubt and was convinced that this trip had to go forward.**

Good morning, Your Holiness! Welcome aboard. Joining you on this much-anticipated trip are about 80 journalists, 10 of whom are from the countries we'll be visiting. There's a certain enthusiasm among the journalists traveling with you as well—enthusiasm mixed with a bit of trepidation, given the intensity of the trip. Welcome aboard! Perhaps you'd like to say a few words, since we're in such excellent company this morning....

POPE LEO XIV:

Buongiorno a tutti, buenos dias, good morning everyone!

First of all, I would like to welcome all of you and once again express my gratitude for your service, for the work that you do, which is so important in helping us to spread the word and especially, of course, the word which is God's message of peace and goodwill for all people.

I am very happy to be here myself. I know some people were doubtful about this trip taking place. I confess that from the first day I had no doubt and was convinced that this trip had to go forward. And I am very happy to say "praise the Lord" and thanks to the wonderful medical assistants out here today. I think I am in fairly good shape.

So you are the witnesses of that and I am happy that you are joining us. I would also like to take the opportunity to present someone that many of you already know: the new Prefect for the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, Dr Montse Montserrat Alvarado, who has joined the Vatican team of the Holy See in taking on this challenging role as Prefect of communications, taking the role of Dr Paolo Ruffini, who has completed his term of service. And so now we have the wonderful experience, the creativity and the life and liveliness of Montse who will be accompanying us on this trip and helping the Vatican and myself in the very important dimension of communication. So, welcome Montse!

And finally, as you all know, we are headed to three countries in Latin America, each one of them with a very particular history.

There are many things in common, and many differences. And of course the longest part of the trip will be in Peru, which for myself, of course, is one of my many homes and I am very happy to be going back there, of course, and I just would like again to say that the primary reason for making this trip is to continue the mission of the Bishop of Rome, of the Pope and sharing the joy

of the Gospel, of announcing the Good News and walking together with people, expressing that closeness which is so important for people, whether it be in their moments of joy or in their moments of sorrow, that they very much are looking for the message of hope in today's world.

So, I very much hope that that will be the primary focus of this journey with the particular tone of each country, of each visit, of their people and cultures.

I am very happy to share this journey with you. So, thank you very much.

02

PLAZA INDEPENDENCIA · MONTEVIDEO

ADDRESS

A people on the move

Meeting with the authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

> **In a single sentence, Artigas spoke of the origin of authority and the responsibility of those who exercise it: authority is received from a specific community and is accountable to that community.**

Mr President of the Republic,
Distinguished Authorities and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With great joy I accepted the kind invitation extended to me to visit this land of Uruguay. I thank you, Mr President, for your words of welcome and for the hospitality with which you have received me. I greet the representatives of the institutions of the Republic here present, and those of the nations accredited to this country.

On this, our first meeting, I wish to extend my greetings to all Uruguayans, wherever they may be. Over the next few days, I will have the pleasure of visiting various places in this country, of encountering its history and meeting the men and women who, in so many different ways, are part of the life of the nation. Among these places, Florida holds a special place, for it is where Our Lady of the Thirty-Three, Patroness of Uruguay, is venerated. As I begin my visit, I would like to place under her protection all those whom I will meet along the way. Her presence accompanied a decisive chapter in the history of the nation and continues to unite very different generations of Uruguayans.

That history includes another episode which I would like to mention here. I am thinking of the *Exodus of the People of the East* in 1811, also known as *La Redota*. We need not look far to recall it, for the monument to Artigas in the center of this square features on its pedestal a bronze frieze in which Angelo Zanelli depicted scenes from that event. I would like to focus on some details of those figures, since they offer a concrete starting point for reflecting on Uruguay today.

At the top of the monument, Artigas appears alone, on horseback. Further down, on the front relief, he reappears among his men, surrounded by the crowd. This detail brings to mind the words he spoke shortly thereafter before the representatives of the Eastern Provinces gathered at the Congress of April in 1813: “My authority,” he said, “comes from you, and it ceases by your sovereign presence” (*Inaugural Address*, Artigas Archive, vol. XI, doc. 82). In a single sentence, Artigas spoke of the origin of authority and the responsibility of those who exercise it: authority is received from a specific community and is accountable to that community.

The year 2025 marked four decades of uninterrupted democracy in Uruguay, during which various governments have succeeded one another by the will of the citizens. Public authority finds its raison d'être in service to the common good and is called to exercise it within the framework of law, with respect for the freedom and responsibility of the citizenry (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 74). Hence the value of those structures which allow for participation in public life, which clearly define the powers of institutions, and which provide for the election of those who assume the task of governing (cf. ibid., 75).

The common good also includes the duty to pass on to future generations the goods we ourselves have received. As my predecessor Pope Francis observed, "the notion of the common good also extends to future generations" (*Laudato Si'*, 159). This responsibility is reflected in decisions that concern the use of natural resources and energy sources. In recent decades, Uruguay has profoundly transformed its electrical grid, which today relies almost entirely on renewable sources. This is a remarkable achievement that required sustained decisions over many years and the participation of various sectors of the country. This step forward now poses new challenges in the areas of transportation, production and the responsible use of land, water and energy. Planning for the long term entails the ability to manage these resources without compromising future possibilities.

Concern for the future also embraces those destined to inhabit this land, the conditions in which they will be born and grow up, and the opportunities they will encounter throughout their lives. Uruguay's demographic trends make this concern particularly pressing. One of the reliefs on the monument depicts a woman holding a baby in her arms. She holds the child close as the march presses forward around her.

That gesture of protection invites us to reflect on life that is just beginning, as well as life still developing in the mother's womb. The unborn already belong to the human family and to the future of their people. Their absolute dependence on their mother does not diminish the dignity to which they are entitled or the protection they deserve. Welcoming a new life requires that fathers assume their responsibility alongside mothers, that the family offer its support, and that social conditions exist that allow both parents to raise and care for their children. The protection of the unborn and the support of

those who welcome them are inseparable. The family remains the primary setting in which each person is welcomed and learns to live with others. Saint John Paul II, who also had the joy of visiting this land, expressed this in a phrase that retains all its original force: “The future of humanity passes by way of the family” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 86).

In another part of the frieze, we see children walking side-by-side with adults. Children are part of the community even before they are able to share in its decisions or contribute to it by their labor. Those walking alongside the adults were one day, in turn, to be entrusted with the responsibility of advancing the life of the community. Caring for the youngest members of society necessarily includes ensuring they receive a suitable education. The home in which children grow up, the nourishment they receive and the presence of adults who accompany them shape their earliest years; education takes up this task, developing children’s abilities, shaping their judgment and preparing them to participate freely and responsibly in the life of society (cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1).

Education must also provide concrete opportunities for entering the workforce, putting the fruits of one’s learning into practice, and achieving personal autonomy by one’s own efforts. Work is thus one of the structures that enables each person to develop his or her abilities and to contribute to the good of others. It is worth recalling that “work is ‘for man’ and not man ‘for work’” (Saint John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 6). This principle remains as relevant as ever in the face of rapid changes in technology and artificial intelligence. The development of these technologies ought to expand human capabilities, facilitate tasks, and create new possibilities, while ensuring that the laborer is not reduced to a mere expendable cog in the production process.

Among the figures on the monument, we also find an elderly woman, stooped, leaning on a cane and advancing with difficulty. Around one of the wagons, several people are gathered and reaching out to one another; some appear more concerned with helping others than simply going about their own business. Those who need help and support to carry on were also part of that community. Their place in it did not depend on their own strength, self-sufficiency, or ability to contribute. Today too, people’s worth cannot be measured by what they produce, by their work or by their ability to

fend for themselves. “The fundamental dignity of each person, therefore, is neither acquired nor earned, nor does it need to be justified” (*Magnifica Humanitas*, 53).

> **Today too, people’s worth cannot be measured by what they produce, by their work or by their ability to fend for themselves.**

The bronze relief portrays faces and gestures, but it tells us nothing of what each individual carried in their heart as they moved amid the others. Today, we can live our lives surrounded by others, at work, on the streets, or even in our own homes, yet remain unaware of the burdens that others may be carrying. Loneliness, anxiety and the loss of hope can become so profound that a person no longer sees a reason to continue living. Given the painful reality of suicide, it is clear that adequate health care, family ties, and the closeness of the community are inseparable. None should ever feel like a stranger among their own or think that their absence matters less than their presence.

> **None should ever feel like a stranger among their own or think that their absence matters less than their presence.**

Other forms of suffering can be seen in illness or poor living conditions. Sickness, disability, physical pain, loss of autonomy, poverty, unemployment or social exclusion can make it especially necessary that others offer help. Recently I experienced firsthand the limitations imposed by illness and I received care for which I am deeply grateful. That

experience makes me think of the many men and women who lack the means to obtain a timely diagnosis or receive the treatments they need. Ensuring that health care is accessible to everyone, regardless of their resources, is a duty that confronts every society. Those facing any of these situations do not cease to be full members of society, nor do their lives lose any of their value. In such circumstances, their weakness makes it all the more urgent that they receive the assistance, resources, and support they need.

Caring for those who suffer is a responsibility incumbent upon the entire human family. For the Church, this duty finds a particular basis in the commandment of Christ to recognize and serve him in those most in need (cf. *Mt* 25:40). As Benedict XVI noted, "the true measure of humanity is essentially determined in relationship to suffering and to the sufferer" (*Spe Salvi*, 38). Hence, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that each person can live with dignity, receive the care they need, and be accompanied until the natural end of his or her life.

Through its dioceses and communities, and through the many people dedicated to the service of others, the Church wishes to cooperate with all those who work to alleviate suffering whenever possible, and to support the individual in cases when suffering cannot be eliminated. To this common effort, the Church contributes what is unique to her: a hope that does not fade when human resources reach their limits and which reminds those undergoing trials that their lives always retain meaning and value, that they are not alone, and that even in dark times they do not cease to be loved by God.

The crowd marching alongside Artigas brought together people from very diverse backgrounds. In the relief, a well-dressed woman walks behind a wagon, while others lead animals or carry their belongings. Those differences are also a part of the history of Uruguay, where generations of men and women from different backgrounds and social conditions made this country a common homeland.

People who are part of the same community may come from very different backgrounds and have unequal resources. Ultimately, the way the economy is organized and directed has a direct impact on people's living conditions

and their ability to shape their future. The creation of wealth, investment and economic initiative — both public and private — are necessary for a country's development, yet their benefits must also translate into goods and opportunities that effectively reach everyone, for "it is individuals that matter, each and every person together with their families" (*Magnifica Humanitas*, 58).

Coexistence among people of different backgrounds and traditions is part of Uruguay's history. That pluralism is expressed in the beliefs and convictions of its citizens today. The secular character of the State involves an obligation to ensure that there is room for believers and non-believers to live together in freedom and respect. This neutrality does not require that the religious dimension be confined to the private sphere. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, no one should be compelled to act against his or her conscience or prevented from acting in accordance with it, whether in private or in public, individually or in association with others, within due limits (cf. *Dignitatis Humanae*, 2–3). On the basis of this freedom, individuals and religious communities can contribute to the common good while respecting the autonomy of civil institutions.

The respect and harmonious coexistence fostered within a nation must also guide its relations with other peoples. The Uruguayan Constitution itself provides that, in international treaties, the Republic shall seek to resolve disputes through arbitration or other peaceful means and shall promote the social and economic integration of Latin American states (cf. Art. 6). The fact that Montevideo is also the seat of the Mercosur Secretariat gives concrete expression to this commitment to fostering opportunities for understanding and cooperation in the region. In an age when differences can easily become a source of conflict, persevering in respect for the law, negotiation and the patient search for agreements is a service that Uruguay can continue to offer its neighbors.

> **In an age when differences can easily become a source of conflict, persevering in respect for the law, negotiation and the patient search for agreements is a service that Uruguay can continue to offer its neighbors.**

Before concluding, I would like now to return to that march depicted in the center of this square. The *Redota* holds a unique place in Uruguayan memory: it commemorates a people put to the test, who had to leave behind much of what they possessed and sought to remain united in the midst of uncertainty.

The reliefs on this monument extend across all four sides of the pedestal. From any one vantage point, we can only glimpse a part of that crowd. To discover the others, we must draw closer, walk around it and let our gaze rest on its figures. The Uruguayan people are revealed precisely in the work viewed as a whole. In the crowd of figures, we can recognize an enduring element of the life of Uruguay: the responsibility of each person to another, which has allowed people of different generations and backgrounds to persevere in building a shared history.

> **The Uruguayan people are revealed precisely in the work viewed as a whole.**

To that Uruguay I have come as the Successor of Peter and as a shepherd, with the desire to meet the pilgrim Church in this land and to draw near, with affection, to all its people. The ties between the Holy See and Uruguay date back to the first years of its independence. In that context, my Predecessor,

Pope Gregory XVI, confirmed the powers of Father Dámaso Antonio Larrañaga and appointed him Apostolic Vicar of the Republic by means of an Apostolic Brief dated 14 August 1832. That act, of an ecclesiastical nature, has also been interpreted as an implicit recognition of the independence of the new eastern State, which at that time was seeking to consolidate its position among the nations.

With her history of faith and service dating back centuries, the Church wishes to continue offering the Uruguayan people what she herself has received — Jesus Christ and the hope proclaimed by his Gospel — and to cooperate, through her own mission, with all those who work to promote the common good and the dignity of every person.

May these days allow us to strengthen what unites us and renew the confidence with which we face difficulties and prepare for what lies ahead. May God bless Uruguay, and may the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom this people entrusted itself at the time of its birth, continue to accompany it throughout its history.

Thank you very much.

THE AUGUSTINIAN KEY

Justice, the measure of power

> **Take away justice, and what are kingdoms but great robberies?**
>
> Saint Augustine, The City of God, IV, 4

Augustine knew that power without justice ceases to be service. It is the Augustinian echo of what the Pope says in the square: authority exists for the common good and is exercised within the law, accountable to the people.

03

METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL · MONTEVIDEO

HOMILY

Where is our heart?

Vespers with bishops, priests, deacons, men and women religious and seminarians

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER

> **Such is the human heart: little by little, it takes on the form of what it loves and in what it places its trust.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

It is a joy to celebrate Evening Prayer with you in this Cathedral, which holds so many memories of the history of its people. Among them is the baptismal font where José Gervasio Artigas was baptized — a sign of the Church's fruitful contribution to the good of the country. A new life began for him then as a child of God. We too have received that same grace in our lives. Through Baptism, Christ makes us sharers in his life and invites us to grow in his likeness, so that we learn to see, to listen and to love as he does.

The Psalm we have just sung contains a surprising warning. After describing the idols of gold and silver as works of human hands, it says: "Those who make them and all who trust them shall become like them" (*Ps* 135:18). People who built those images ended up becoming like them. Such is the human heart: little by little, it takes on the form of what it loves and in what it places its trust. That is why Jesus tells us: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (*Mt* 6:21).

We who have entrusted our lives to the Lord need to ask ourselves where our heart is. Sometimes it can become attached to a work we consider to be our own, to the recognition we receive or to the peace of mind that comes from having everything under control. Without realizing it, we begin to view others from a perspective rooted in those concerns. Faithfulness to our vocation calls us to return again and again to Jesus Christ; to let him be our treasure, the one whom we wish to resemble.

We who have entrusted our lives to the Lord need to ask ourselves where our heart is.

Idols, the Psalm continues, "have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear" (*Ps* 135:16–17). They are made of gold and silver, but they lack life. How different is the God in whom we have placed our trust! He sees the suffering of his people and

hears their cry. This is how he revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush: “I have observed the misery of my people… I have heard their cry” (*Ex* 3:7).

When the Son of God became man, that divine compassion was revealed in a human face, in eyes, ears and hands like our own. Jesus looked up at Zacchaeus, hidden among the branches of a tree (cf. *Lk* 19:5). He listened to Bartimaeus, even when many wanted to silence him (cf. *Mk* 10:48–49). He reached out to touch a leper (cf. *Mk* 1:41) and blessed the children who came to him (cf. *Mk* 10:16). He spoke the word that cast out demons (cf. *Mk* 1:25–26) and, from the Cross, uttered a plea for forgiveness for his executioners (cf. *Lk* 23:34). This is the nature of our God. Through the life of Jesus, we have come to know how he looks upon us and how much he loves us (cf. *Jn* 14:9).

Dear brothers, through you, Christ has sought to reach many people with his love. Your eyes have watched entire generations grow up and have discovered tears that went unnoticed. Your ears have heard confessions that were difficult to utter. How many people have entered the confessional with fear and left rejoicing because of the forgiveness they received. The same is true of your hands, which have so often elevated the Body of Christ, assisted the sick, prepared a meal or supported those who could no longer walk. Those hands have brought God’s tenderness to so many people through the charism of your congregations. Some bear the marks of age and of hard work. How beautiful are the hands that have grown old doing good!

> **How beautiful are the hands that have grown old doing good!**

There is a transformation that the Lord brings about in those who remain close to him. The brief reading reminded us that the testing of our faith produces endurance (cf. *Jas* 1:3). Our likeness to Christ also matures in the midst of difficulties, such as when work seems fruitless, when our strength wanes or when we must start anew. Eventually endurance leaves its mark.

Over the years, a gaze can become more merciful, hands more willing to serve and words more capable of comforting. May trials always find us united to Jesus, so that they may help us to grow in his love.

Beneath the vaults of this cathedral rests the body of Blessed Jacinto Vera. In that tomb, in the hope of the resurrection, are the feet that traveled the roads of Uruguay to bring the Gospel to his people; the hands that blessed, helped the poor and administered the sacraments; the ears that listened to countless confessions; and the eyes that noticed those in need of help. When recalling his simplicity of speech and even his way of walking, a religious sister who knew him for many years left this testimony: “Just by looking at him, it seemed as though he were always in prayer” (*Positio*, I, 154). His relationship with God had shaped his face, his gestures and the way he was among others. Those who approached him encountered something of Christ’s goodness, even before hearing a word of his preaching.

Dear brothers and sisters, one of the secrets of evangelization is to resemble the One whom we proclaim. In this land, where many of our contemporaries barely know Jesus Christ and so many young people have grown up far from the life of the Church, that witness has a special power. May the way we look at others, the way we listen or the way we reach out to those who suffer prompt them to ask about the origins of that love. When we speak to them of Jesus, may they discover the very Lord whose goodness they have begun to experience through us, despite our own poverty.



Dear brothers and sisters, one of the secrets of evangelization is to resemble the One whom we proclaim.

That desire for others to come to know and follow Jesus has also been expressed in prayer for vocations. When the inter-diocesan seminary received no new candidates in 2024, many of the faithful began to come together for days of prayer and fasting to ask the Lord to send workers into his harvest (cf. *Mt* 9:38). Since then, they have persevered in their efforts in

order that others might hear his call. Today we give thanks because several young people who are seated among us have begun their journey in the seminary and in consecrated life. What a joy it is to know that generous responses to Christ's love continue to come forth! I offer heartfelt thanks to those who have supported this initiative, and I encourage them to persevere. See in these fruits the proof that God hears the prayers of his people.

I hope that this experience in Uruguay will echo throughout the entire Church. From this Cathedral in Montevideo, I invite my brother bishops throughout the world to promote days of prayer and fasting in their dioceses for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life. May parishes, families and religious communities unite in this prayer. May the example of this land inspire many others to pray with the same confidence.

Dear seminarians and novices, look to those who have already been walking on the path of self-giving. See their worn hands, their persevering love and their way of relating to Jesus. Learn from them that intimacy with the Lord. To those of you who have spent many years in ministry or in consecrated life, I ask that you always return to what is essential. Cherish the silence of prayer, listening to the word and encountering Christ in the Eucharist. In that intimacy, the love that led you to give your lives to him is renewed, and your hearts come to take on the traits of his heart.

There is still one image from the Psalm that I would like to recall. It is said of those idols that "there is no breath in their mouths" (*Ps* 135:17). The risen Lord, on the other hand, breathed on his disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (*Jn* 20:22). That same Spirit gives life to this clay that we are (cf. *Gen* 2:7) and unites us in one body. Let yourselves be guided by him and do everything united in the bond of love, especially when you find yourselves surrounded by all kinds of trials (cf. *Jas* 1:2). Even when many kilometers separate you, support one another and always remain in communion with the Successor of Peter, who also needs the support of your prayers.

In a few moments we will sing the *Magnificat*. In the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary were formed those eyes that would look upon us with mercy, those ears that would hear our pleas and those hands that would reach out

to save us. May Our Lady of the Thirty-Three help us to keep our hearts close to her Son, so that when the time comes to close our eyes, we may hear the Lord's voice calling us by name and confidently abandon ourselves into his hands. Amen.

IMPROMPTU REMARKS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE (MONTEVIDEO)

Where are the young people? Where are the Pope's young people? Louder!

Good evening, everyone! Thank you very much!

Thank you very much for the warm welcome. I can see that Uruguay is a country of young people who have faith.

> **I can see that Uruguay is a country of young people who have faith.**

Very well, it is a pleasure to greet you all; I hope to see you again in the coming days.

The Nuncio says he wants to sleep, but sing as long as you like! Well, maybe not quite that long, because the neighbors will want to sleep, too. But thank you very much. Thank you for your enthusiasm; thank you for being here.

May God bless you all! And may the blessing of God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you forever.

Good night!

THE AUGUSTINIAN KEY

To use and to enjoy

> **To enjoy something is to cling to it with love for its own sake.**
>
> Saint Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, I, 4, 4

Augustine distinguishes between “using” (*uti*) and “enjoying” (*frui*): only God can occupy the definitive place in the human heart; everything else, even our apostolic works, is a road toward him. Hence the question of Vespers: where is our heart set?

04

PAYSANDÚ

HOMILY

Bridges, palm groves and mate

Holy Mass at Parque París Londres

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

> **This is the vocation to which we are all called: to build bridges, strengthen bonds, unite, communicate and share the joy of faith, as Blessed Jacinto Vera did, "whether the time is favorable or unfavorable"** (2 Tim 4:2)**.**

Dear brothers and sisters,

The readings we have just heard describe the figure of a righteous man whom the Lord helps and strengthens so that he may carry out the mission entrusted to him. In his Letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul expresses gratitude for the community's support of his missionary work, conscious that, in his poverty, God is his only wealth and that divine providence is made manifest through the brothers and sisters to whom he has been sent.

The Psalm, for its part, calls blessed those who love the law of the Lord and whose deeds are consistent with their faith. Similarly, in the Gospel, Jesus emphasizes the honest man who serves God and who places the Lord at the center of his life, remaining faithful in everything entrusted to him, whether it be great or small.

Today, as we gather here in Paysandú to celebrate the Eucharist — rejoicing to see so many members of the Church in Uruguay assembled around the same table, together with pilgrims from neighboring countries — the Liturgy of the Word invites us to recall the presence of so many people of faith who came to the Río de la Plata region. From the earliest days of evangelization on this continent, they arrived in the name of the Lord to proclaim the great joy they themselves had experienced in encountering Christ. Like the angels who appeared to the shepherds (cf. *Lk* 2:10), they joyfully shared the Good News of the Gospel, expressing their faith through works of charity and mercy.

In this celebration, we also wish to remember and give thanks to God for the life and ministry of a son of this land: Blessed Jacinto Vera, Bishop of Montevideo, who bore faithful witness to the faith he proclaimed through generous charity and total dedication to the apostolic mission. He widely exercised his pastoral zeal, sparing no sacrifice. For instance, he often traveled on horseback to care for the sick, despite the great distances, the dangers of the journey, and the harsh weather. The "*gaucho* bishop" traveled the length and breadth of Uruguay three times, bringing faith and hope to its people. During the historic Siege of Paysandú in 1864, Bishop Vera took up residence on the Isla de la Caridad, across from the besieged

city, to care for refugees and the wounded on both sides. He remained there until the siege ended, accompanying his people and pleading in the name of God for the armies of brothers to embrace one another in fraternal love.

Dear brothers and sisters, today it is our turn to continue the legacy left to us by these sowers of the Gospel. We must do so bearing in mind the word of God: with justice, honesty and faithfulness, recognizing that the message we proclaim does not belong to us. It is a treasure we have received from the Lord, and we carry it in earthen vessels (cf. *2 Cor* 4:7).

Three symbols that characterize this region can help us reflect on the treasure of faith we have received and the mission now entrusted to us. The first is the *bridge;* the second the *palm groves;* and the third is the *mate* drink.

In this city of Paysandú stands the General Artigas International Bridge, which spans the Uruguay River, uniting two neighboring countries. It is not difficult to imagine the benefits a bridge brings: openness, communication and exchange. That is why it is so important to be builders of bridges! This is the vocation to which we are all called: to build bridges, strengthen bonds, unite, communicate and share the joy of faith, as Blessed Jacinto Vera did, "whether the time is favorable or unfavorable" (*2 Tim* 4:2).

Moreover, a bridge needs solid foundations if it is to withstand even the strongest currents. Indeed, just as a house built on rock stands firm in the midst of a storm, while one built on sand is in danger of collapsing (cf. *Mt* 7:24-27), so too a bridge needs proper foundations to withstand the force of wind and water. Whenever you go down to the riverbank and see the bridge, remember that this symbol represents us and reminds us of the importance of a solid Christian formation. We need to be well prepared to give an account of our faith to anyone who asks (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15) and not allow ourselves to be carried away "by all kinds of strange teachings" (*Heb* 13:9). Only in this way can we become instruments of unity and bonds of charity.

The second symbol that characterizes and embellishes this land is the *palm groves*. The Book of Psalms tells us that "the righteous flourish like the palm tree" (*Ps* 92:12). This tree can withstand strong winds, has deep roots, rises straight toward the sky in search of light, and produces the sweet yatay fruit. This is a beautiful image of our origin and the destiny to which we are called:

to take root in Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End of our lives, so that, by remaining united to him, we may bear good fruit (cf. *Jn* 15:5).

At the same time, we observe that palm trees in this region do not stand alone, but form groves; there are many of them, yet they are neither alone nor far apart. Likewise, the Church is a community of brothers and sisters that sinks its roots and draws from a common spring: the word of God, the sacraments, prayer and charitable works. Together, her faithful lift their eyes to praise Christ — the dawn from on high, whose light guides humanity's steps along the path of peace (cf. *Lk* 1:78-79).

Finally, let us consider a symbol found in every home in this country, in every place of study and work, and at every gathering of friends. I am referring to *mate*, that drink so characteristic of South America, whose profound meaning you can explain better than I can. Surely, many of you enjoyed *mate* on your way to this celebration today and will have some again on your journey home. *Mate* has even made its way to Rome!

Mate is a sign of familiarity, friendship and encounter. It teaches us to share and to be together, strengthening the bonds that unite us as brothers and sisters. It is a sign of welcome, integration and shared values. "Drinking *mate*" is a ritual rich in symbolism, in which dialogue takes place without words and every detail holds its own meaning. I also think of those moments when one drinks *mate* alone, silently and prayerfully. In those moments of solitude, how often have so many of you entrusted to God your concerns and needs, your deepest desires and longings!

“It teaches us to share and to be together, strengthening the bonds that unite us as brothers and sisters.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must reflect on these symbols that we share, which give us identity and a sense of belonging, which speak to us of our origins and point us toward the future. Faith, too, has been part of the life of the Uruguayan people since their earliest days, and it must be passed on to future generations with creative courage.



Faith, too, has been part of the life of the Uruguayan people since their earliest days, and it must be passed on to future generations with creative courage.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us of the importance of being faithful to the gifts we have received: "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much" (*Lk* 16:10). Many men and women, like Bishop Jacinto Vera, lived out these words. Faithful to the vocation they had received, they sowed the seeds of the Gospel in the hearts of the Uruguayan people. Those seeds remain alive in the community, but it is essential to continue providing the necessary conditions for them to grow and reach their full potential. This involves continuing to educate children and young people in the faith, accompanying families, supporting the elderly and carrying out works of charity.

Dear brothers and sisters, I encourage you to carry forward the mission of evangelization with enthusiasm. Be bridges, so that many may encounter Jesus. Be a fraternal community that comes together and shares life, projects, dreams and hopes, especially with those most in need. Be a community of prayer that maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Lord as a friend speaks to a friend (cf. *Jn* 15:15). Christ is counting on all of you! Christ is counting on you!

Be bridges, so that many may encounter Jesus.

May our heavenly Mother, Our Lady of the Thirty-Three, protect you on your journey through life and always guide you to an encounter with her Son, Jesus.

GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO THE FAITHFUL GATHERED IN THE SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Good morning!

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for being here.

As you may have heard in the homily during Holy Mass, I spoke of three symbols, three expressions that reflect very well part of life, part of our Christian life. First, being bridge-builders — just as you here have this bridge that unites countries, we must build bridges that unite all peoples. They unite us in faith, they unite us because we believe in one God, we believe that peace is possible and we want to build peace.

The palm groves symbolize that we want to be gathered together, that we want to build communities of faith.

The palm groves symbolize that we want to be gathered together, that we want to build communities of faith.

And mate — this expression so important in your culture — where two friends or two family members come together, often sharing in a dialogue without words, yet united in sharing life, its difficulties as well as its joys.

May these symbols also help us to continue living our lives despite sorrow, difficulties and challenges, seeking God's presence among us and receiving from the Lord the strength and courage to live out our faith, to proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ, who has given us life. I offer you this blessing as a small gesture of my desire always to be close to you.

The Lord be with you.

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and be with you always. Amen.

May God bless you! Congratulations!

05

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE · MONTEVIDEO

GREETING AND ADDRESS

“Go and do likewise”

Meeting with the social reality of Casavalle

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

> **“ May these homes be for your families much more than simply a roof over their heads: may they be a true home where you can grow in dignity, peace and hope, always experiencing God’s love and closeness.**

IMPROMPTU REMARKS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO THE FAMILIES OF CASAVALLE OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH, MONTEVIDEO

God's blessing comes in many forms. Today we want to ask for his blessing upon every family here present, upon their loved ones and upon all the families who live here in this area.

A great blessing comes when we gather as a community, when we learn to work together, to collaborate on a common project, to affirm that life is important, that our faith sustains us, and that we want to be faithful to Jesus, our best friend.

The Lord be with you. May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you. Amen.

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, good afternoon.

It gives me joy to visit this parish, this neighborhood, to walk through the streets and see the projects that have been carried out with such hard work. Being here with you makes me feel at home, and brings back memories of the visits I made to various communities as a missionary. I would like to thank Cardinal Daniel Sturla, Archbishop of Montevideo, Father Pablo Coimbra, parish priest of this community, and Mrs Carmen Albana Sanz for their words of welcome. I also thank all of you for being here today and for preparing this gathering with such enthusiasm. In a special way, I am grateful to Angélica, Alan, and Katherine for sharing their testimonies and opening their hearts to recount with us the triumph of life, faith, and hope.

This parish is dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whom my predecessors declared "Patroness of Latin America" and "Empress of the Americas." The loving presence of our heavenly mother on this continent invites us to look beyond the reality around us, to see beyond borders and to open our hearts to eternal realities by lifting our gaze. Mary teaches us to do whatever her Son Jesus tells us (cf. *Jn* 2:5), and that is also the mission of parishes: to be a

lighthouse that points to the presence of Jesus Christ, offering to all the light of God's Word, the help of the sacraments, the support of prayer and the balm of fraternal charity.

A project has been carried out in this parish community to build several homes for families with limited means. I am pleased to have been able to contribute to this beautiful initiative through the benefactors of the Papal Foundation, to whom I offer my thanks for their generosity. May these homes be for your families much more than simply a roof over their heads: may they be a true home where you can grow in dignity, peace and hope, always experiencing God's love and closeness.

I would like to share with you a story that Jesus told his disciples, one that you surely know: the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk* 10:29-37). It tells of a man who "fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead" (v. 30). The terrible assault of the traveler on the road was a most tragic and unjust situation. Added to his pain was the indifference of those who saw him in need, yet passed him by (cf. vv. 31–32). But the story does not end there. A ray of hope shines through: a Samaritan saw the man, was moved with compassion, approached him, tended his wounds, took him to an inn and provided for his care and recovery (cf. vv. 33–35).

Dear brothers and sisters, this story is repeated today in the widespread insecurity and violence that unfortunately threaten the peace of our neighborhoods and even the lives of our loved ones, and all too often society responds with indifference. Yet we can see another side: the actions of many institutions and people of goodwill who foster peace and offer practical assistance to those in need. A shining example is Father Cacho's life of selfless service. As Angélica told us in her testimony, he built bridges, tore down walls and fostered encounters.

We need to continue to commit ourselves to the charity and closeness of the Good Samaritan who did not remain indifferent upon seeing misfortune, but took responsibility for his brother's life. We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that there are children in Uruguay who do not go to school for fear of never returning home. We cannot silence our conscience when we see a mother lacking the means to feed her children. We cannot ignore the many

people around us who are suffering, alone and vulnerable. We heard about this firsthand through Katherine's moving words. In a country as rich in resources as this, children should never have to go to bed hungry or be denied the chance of a decent education and a dignified future because of the insecurity that reigns in the streets. Much less should they have to suffer violence to the point of losing their lives.

> **We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that there are children in Uruguay who do not go to school for fear of never returning home.**

We must work together: the Church, civil society, and the State. We need to shake off our apathy and advocate for the common good. This is what Alan has shared through his experience: today he freely gives to others what he himself has received. It is up to us to decide to build a new city where no one is excluded, or to remain comfortably immersed in our own affairs. As Pope Francis told us, "the decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders" (*Fratelli Tutti*, 69).

> **It is up to us to decide to build a new city where no one is excluded, or to remain comfortably immersed in our own affairs.**

The Church's mission stems from evangelical charity, which impels her "to draw near to the wounds of humanity whenever they surface with greater severity. When the Church intervenes, she does so following the example of the Good Samaritan, with discretion and closeness, aware that what arises

from urgent necessity cannot become the norm, nor replace the institutional responsibilities proper to the civil community" (Encyclical Letter *Magnifica Humanitas*, 21). Let us therefore unite our efforts and respond generously to the call to build together a homeland of brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, the parable of the Good Samaritan concludes with Jesus' command: "Go and do likewise" (*Lk* 10:37). Every Christian should hear this commandment echoing in their heart every day (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, 107). May these words renew us and inspire us to continue building a new city together, where love and peace reign. May God bless you, and may our Mother of Guadalupe — for whom I have a special affection and veneration, as I received my episcopal ordination on her feast day — shelter you under her heavenly mantle. Thank you.

Dear friends, the parable of the Good Samaritan concludes with Jesus' command: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37)**.**

06

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF URUGUAY · MONTEVIDEO

ADDRESS

A walk through the five senses

Meeting with the world of education

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

> **I therefore invite you to take a brief “journey” through our five senses and, by reflecting on them, to rediscover the beauty of the Gospel and the grandeur of our humanity.**

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to meet with you, who, following the example of Jesus, the Divine Teacher, have dedicated your lives to the service of education. I greet Cardinal Daniel Sturla, S.D.B., Grand Chancellor of this Catholic University. I also greet the Bishops, the Rector, Father Julio Fernández Techera, S.J., and the civil authorities. I extend a special greeting to the professors and students who have come from so many educational institutions throughout the country.

A little over thirty-eight years ago, Saint John Paul II visited this institution of higher learning, which at the time was just getting started. Today, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the educational work you have done and continue to do in the communities dedicated to formation and teaching, at every level and stage of learning, in service of the proclamation of the Gospel and the dignity of the human person. This perseverance demonstrates that Catholic education in Uruguay has become "the concrete way in which the Gospel becomes an educational gesture, a relationship, a culture" (Apostolic Letter *Drawing New Maps of Hope,* 1.1). It also affirms for us that "the Gospel does not grow old, but makes 'all things new' (*Rev* 21:5). Each generation hears it as a regenerating novelty. Each generation... [discovers] its seminal and multiplying power" (ibid.).

The goal of the pastoral mission in education is for students, teachers and school administrators to hear, see, taste, touch and smell the Good News, allowing it to enlighten the senses, just as the vibrant murals on this university campus do. In this way, all who belong to the educational community can grow and recognize more fully their inalienable dignity as human persons. The same holds true in extracurricular and informal educational settings, as well as in educational communities and those focused on social reintegration and therapeutic care. In these contexts, the attentive presence and lived witness of credible, competent adults who collaborate with one another carry even greater weight than words.

In light of the global reality we are experiencing, I believe that to achieve this goal, “dualistic views must be overcome: the human being ‘though made of body and soul, is one.’ Reducing the body to an ‘object’ to be disposed of arbitrarily is always a denial of the dignity of the person” (*General Audience*, 9 September 2026; *Gaudium et Spes*, 14).

I therefore invite you to take a brief “journey” through our five senses and, by reflecting on them, to rediscover the beauty of the Gospel and the grandeur of our humanity.

Let us begin by reflecting on the following verse from the Psalms: “When I see the heavens” (*Ps* 8:4). The psalmist leads us to one of the most sublime operations of our eyes: contemplation. Today, contemplation is understood as looking attentively, almost in wonder, at something spiritual or material. Contemplating creation and encountering God awaken in us an awareness of our place in his plan and of our personal and collective responsibility to preserve the original harmony. We can also appreciate this in the twelve buildings on campus, which blend harmoniously into the surroundings of this neighborhood.

Contemplation is a form of evangelization within the cognitive process of attention, which is becoming increasingly difficult. As progress is made in this regard, our children and young people attain the depth they long for, find spaces for silence and discernment, and become more accustomed to engaging in dialogue with their conscience and with God (cf. Apostolic Letter *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, 10.3). I invite you, then, to give contemplation a prominent place in your educational work.

Secondly, in saying “*the heavens, the work of your hands*” (*Ps* 8:4), the psalmist advances in contemplation to the point of seeing the hands of God, like those of an artist, creating the heavenly lights, the angels and the living creatures that move in the firmament, on the earth and in the waters. Among all these beings, only humans will have fingers that, united with their hands, will cultivate the earth, bring forth fruit, greet their brothers and sisters, caress and embrace. Yet we cannot forget that today those human hands are producing the most terrible of “human works”: war (cf. *Address at the UNESCO Headquarters*, 25 September 2026).

The Catholic education you are fostering is called to aid the educational community in recognizing the importance of touch, of fingers and of hands in promoting peace. If our students can experience the “baptismal embrace which the Father gave us when we were little ones,” they will long for “yet another embrace, that of the merciful Father who awaits us in glory” (Francis, Apostolic Exhortation*Evangelii Gaudium*, 144). Helping our children and young people “feel that they live in the midst of these two embraces is the difficult but beautiful task of the one who preaches the Gospel” (ibid.). Those who feel embraced by the Father will inevitably become peacemakers.



Those who feel embraced by the Father will inevitably become peacemakers.

Continuing our journey, the Apostle Peter directs our attention to the sense of taste when he says: “You have tasted that the Lord is good” (*1 Pet* 2:3). This sense evokes the notion of flavor and, with it, the wisdom that comes from experiencing, reflecting on and savoring. I am speaking of the wisdom that draws us closer to God’s goodness; the wisdom that makes us brothers and sisters; the wisdom that makes us saints. Tasting is not limited to recognizing flavors, identifying foods or classifying meals. In the same way, someone who gathers information without discernment, reflection and understanding of context cannot be considered wise.

It is therefore pressing that education in our schools and universities contribute to the “judicious use of technologies and AI, placing the person before the algorithm and harmonizing technical, emotional, social, spiritual, and ecological intelligence” (cf. Apostolic Letter*Drawing New Maps of Hope*, 10.3). May our children and young people savor “what is good and acceptable and perfect” (*Rom* 12:2).

To consider the sense of smell, we can turn to the story of the anointing at Bethany as recounted by John the Evangelist: “The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume” (*Jn* 12:3). Saint Augustine reminds us that “the world has been filled with good reputation, for a good reputation is a sweet

fragrance” (*Commentary on Saint John, Treatise 50, 7*). Today, however, people’s reputations are under constant attack, to the point that discarding, rejecting and belittling others have become a foul odor to which our sense of smell has grown accustomed.

> **Saint Augustine reminds us that “the world has been filled with good reputation, for a good reputation is a sweet fragrance”** (Commentary on Saint John, Treatise 50, 7)**.**

Indeed, the process of dehumanization we are experiencing poses a challenge to our schools and universities. “The paradox has become increasingly evident: while ‘intelligence’ is attributed to computational systems, we struggle to recognize the inalienable dignity of human persons, whose lives are judged according to the criterion of efficiency and, when deemed no longer productive, are rejected and discarded” (*Address at the UNESCO Headquarters*, 25 September 2026).

It is essential that we defend the *sweet fragrance* of the human person, grounded in the *sweet fragrance* of the Messiah. We need to proclaim anew that human life must be respected at every stage and in every condition. No one is to be rejected.

> **It is essential that we defend the sweet fragrance of the human person, grounded in the sweet fragrance of the Messiah.**

As we draw our reflection to a close, let us consider the sense of hearing by recalling the words of the evangelist Matthew: “Let anyone with ears listen” (*Mt* 13:9). We conclude here with the hope that the reflections shared today at this institution of higher learning will be heard and, subsequently, heeded in your educational establishments. Fine-tuning our hearing is important in today’s world. Discerning what we hear makes all the difference. “Saint Augustine, grafting biblical wisdom onto the Greco-Roman tradition, understood that the authentic teacher arouses the desire for truth, educates freedom to read the signs and listen to the inner voice” (Apostolic Letter *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, 2.2).

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“Saint Augustine, grafting biblical wisdom onto the Greco-Roman tradition, understood that the authentic teacher arouses the desire for truth, educates freedom to read the signs and listen to the inner voice” (Apostolic Letter Drawing New Maps of Hope, 2.2).

Our Catholic education cannot be confined to a closed circle. Rather, it must learn to listen to families, civil society, political and administrative authorities, as well as representatives of the various economic sectors and professional groups. Today, our children and young people “listen” when they participate in volunteer service, missionary activities and community projects. Those who listen recognize others as a blessing, not as a threat. In Sacred Scripture, listening to the Lord is seen as an act of wisdom, prudence and justice (cf. *Prov* 1:2-5; 2:1-9). Our educational initiatives must embody these three virtues, bearing in mind that generations are changing far more rapidly than in the past and that keeping pace with the times — without abandoning sound tradition — is a real challenge.

> **Those who listen recognize others as a blessing, not as a threat.**

Dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to continue on your journey, evangelizing and contemplating the whole person: “body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 3). We must not stop. Let us continue walking with him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Once again, I express my appreciation for the educational work you carry out. Entrusting it to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, I cordially impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

IMPROMPTU GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV AT THE END OF THE MEETING WITH THE EDUCATION COMMUNITY

Thank you very much. Good evening everyone, and thank you for being here. I would like to tell you that I have a great desire in my heart. Namely, that the enthusiasm you are experiencing today will be with you every day, and that you may be the voice that Uruguay needs to discover how truly important faith in God is, how valuable human life is and how precious each of your lives is.

May you continue to live with this enthusiasm, with this joy. Joy announces the great gift. Thank you very much. May God bless you.

THE AUGUSTINIAN KEY

The inner Teacher

Saint Augustine, The Teacher (*De magistro*)

In this work, the Bishop of Hippo explains that the outer teacher helps with words, but truth is discovered within the person, where Christ is the inner Teacher. That is why, for Augustine, to teach is to accompany toward the truth, and a good teacher leaves, like the perfume of Bethany, a trace that remains.

07

ESTADIO CENTENARIO · MONTEVIDEO

ADDRESS

I announce to you a great joy!

Prayer vigil

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

> **God chose Bethlehem, and that choice alone is enough to prevent us from equating smallness with insignificance.**

Dear brother and sisters, dear Uruguay, good evening! Thank you, thank you!

I give thanks to God for the opportunity to be here with you. I also thank Cardinal Sturla, Archbishop of Montevideo, for his words of welcome, as well as Federica, Giovanni, and the Gutiérrez Hernández family for sharing their testimonies with such sincerity. I know that long years of faithfulness lie beneath what can be seen during a brief visit: families have passed on the faith, priests and consecrated men and women have given their lives, laypeople, often during their youth, have sustained their communities, and many others have placed themselves at the service of others out of love for God. Thank you for making Jesus Christ present in so many lives. He chose us so that we might go and bear fruit (cf. *Jn* 15:16), and perhaps much of that fruit remains where we ourselves cannot even see it. The Church is deeply grateful to you.

Being here with you this evening gives me the opportunity to share a reflection on something that many Christian communities are experiencing today: the advance of secularization and an increasingly widespread religious indifference. In many places, the faith is no longer passed on as readily as it was in previous generations, and the number of people who live most of their lives without Church attendance or religious practice is growing. The members of the pilgrim Church in Uruguay have had to learn to live and proclaim their faith in this context, as we have just heard. For this reason, their experience can help brothers and sisters in other parts of the world who are beginning to discover, in different ways, what it means to be a minority. Yet even in these circumstances, many persevere: parents who pray with their children, teachers who strive to live and bear witness to their faith, young people who have discovered Christ and wish to follow him even when they feel alone, communities that continue to gather, and priests who travel great distances to bring the sacraments to the faithful. As I reflected on all of this, one small biblical town came to mind: Bethlehem.

The prophet Micah had called it “the least among the clans of Judah” (5:2); Saint Matthew, on the other hand, later said: “By no means are you the least” (2:6). Bethlehem was still small. Nothing had changed in its size or political importance. Perhaps Bethlehem can teach us something about this reality: when we are few in number, when our strength wanes, when we

realize that our social presence is no longer what it once was, we may be tempted to judge our situation by purely human standards. The Gospel invites us to see things differently. God chose Bethlehem, and that choice alone is enough to prevent us from equating smallness with insignificance.

We need only think of the Eucharist: the Lord of the universe is present under the humble appearances of bread and wine! That same divine logic is already revealed in his birth. Saint Luke recounts that, when the time came for the child to be born, "there was no place for them" (2:7). All the inns were full. Perhaps we can see in this an image of today's indifference. Life becomes filled with activities, affections, plans and distractions, until the absence of God is no longer felt as an absence. We end up living without seeking him, or even without realizing how much we need him.

Christ comes, but the inn is full. There is no room inside, so he ends up lying in a manger. Soon Herod will try to kill him, unable to tolerate a reign he cannot control. Something of Bethlehem continues to happen: God can be considered unnecessary, and faith confined to the private sphere, as though it had nothing to contribute to society. When we try to build a world without God, we run the risk of leaving humanity without a place as well. But none of this changes the reality: that Child is God, and he comes to save us. That "us" includes each and every one of us, for indifference can also creep, little by little, into the lives of those of us who believe.

Bethlehem asks us a simple question: is there room for him? Is there room in our time, in our way of thinking, in our homes? Is there room to listen to him, to receive his forgiveness, to allow his word to correct us? We need to keep Christ at the center of our lives through prayer, Mass, Confession and the meditative reading of the Gospel. We must all become disciples again and again. If we want others to find Christ, we need to know the way to Bethlehem ourselves first.



Bethlehem asks us a simple question: is there room for him?

The Magi also went to Bethlehem after seeing a star from afar. They were not experts in the Scriptures. They did not know where their journey would end, and they could not even explain what they were seeking. But that light awakened in them a yearning that set them on their way. Dear friends: with humility and simplicity, you can reflect the light of Christ in your own lives. Perhaps there are people who would never open a Bible on their own, who have not set foot in a church in years, or who cannot even say whether they believe in God. But when they see you, the desire for God may be awakened in them; they may even discover that it is worth risking their lives to find him.

Friends, young people, dare to take the step of marrying, starting a family yourselves. Do not be afraid of “forever”! Married couples, open your home to life, even when the world tells you that a child is a burden. If any of you feel that Christ is calling you to leave everything behind to follow him in the priesthood or in consecrated life, do not ignore that voice out of fear of missing out on other opportunities. When being just and honest comes at a price, pay it. When forgiving seems like a defeat, forgive. When everyone tells you to think of yourselves first, do not be afraid to put yourselves in the last place. Be willing to give up time, money, comfort and plans to serve others. May those who see you find themselves asking: “Why do they live in this way? Where do they get this freedom? Why do they love one another so much?”

The star the Magi saw was not the destination. Its mission was to lead them to Bethlehem, where Christ is. If our lives spark a question, they will have borne fruit when that question guides someone to Jesus. To shed much light, we do not need to be many, but rather to reflect the Lord’s light.

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To shed much light, we do not need to be many, but rather to reflect the Lord’s light.

Saint Luke now takes us to another scene: some shepherds are spending the night tending their flocks. They did not follow the star; they did not set out on any journey, nor did they seem to be searching for anything. They are simply in the midst of their lives, doing what they do every night. It is precisely there that God comes to meet them: “Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people” (*Lk* 2:10). The motto of my visit is inspired by this proclamation: *I announce to you a great joy!*These words should always occupy a central place in the life of the Church. Good News needs witnesses, for we have received news that deserves to be proclaimed to the world: Jesus Christ! The Son of God has become man! He is God with us!

Through him we know that our sins can be forgiven. We can accompany those who are dying and tell them that their lives will not end in nothingness. We can bring bread and wine to the altar and receive his Body and Blood. We can say to those who have fallen, “Get up; you can still begin again.” Look at what has been entrusted to us! Jesus Christ is our hope. Society may find many valuable things in other institutions, but none can replace the proclamation that God’s love is stronger than death, hatred, violence, war and sin. This is the joy we bring; the Pope has come to remind you about this joy.

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We can say to those who have fallen, “Get up; you can still begin again.”

The angel adds that this joy is intended for “all the people.” He does not say “for those who were expecting it,” nor “for those who are perfect.” Some people, like the Magi, are already searching, and we must accompany them on their journey. Others, however, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, are not searching for anything. For them, this joy must go out and find them in the midst of their night.

After hearing the proclamation, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem.” There they found Mary, Joseph and the Child. The Evangelist adds that they returned to their fields “glorifying and praising God” (*Lk* 2:20). They returned to the same work, the same paths and probably the same problems. But they were no longer the same. They had encountered Christ.

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But they were no longer the same. They had encountered Christ.

Dear friends, may this encounter be like a visit to Bethlehem, so that you can return to your lives in a new way! May Christ truly enter into what you do, what you love, what you choose — even those aspects of your life that no one sees. Be saints! Do not settle for a merely decent life or for a habitual faith, content with doing only the essential. Do not give God only a part of yourselves — give yourselves completely! Saints are men and women who overflow with the abundance of life in Christ. They are free and authentic people whose lives make it attractive to say a resounding “yes” to love, truth and happiness. Do not be afraid, then, to aspire to holiness. Christ did not call us to mediocrity; he called us to a new and full life like his own.

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Christ did not call us to mediocrity; he called us to a new and full life like his own.

Dear brothers and sisters, dear Uruguay: may everyone know that we have been to Bethlehem. May it be evident that Christ lives and that encountering him makes all the difference. That same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, who died and rose again, lives forever and remains with us. Christ awaits us, truly present in the Eucharist. How beautiful that Bethlehem means precisely “house of bread.” There was born the One who would give himself

to us as the Bread of Life. Today, therefore, we can continue to encounter him — so near and so humble — in every tabernacle. Seek him there, in Eucharistic adoration. Speak to him as you would to a friend, and let him look upon you.

Let us also place our lives under the gaze of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three. May she, the Morning Star who leads us to her Son, teach us to recognize him and follow him. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to always respond to his call like she did: “Here I am, Lord; here is your servant. Let your will be done in me!”

Thank you.

THE AUGUSTINIAN KEY

A restless heart

> **You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.**
>
> Saint Augustine, Confessions, I, 1

The restlessness of the Magi, which the Pope evokes tonight, is the same that Augustine recognised in his own heart: a distant light that sets us on the road toward the One who was already seeking us.

08

JUANICÓ AND FLORIDA

HOMILY

Faith is learned at home

Holy Mass at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER

> **That gesture reminds us that the history of peoples, too, cannot be fully understood without reference to God.**

IMPROMPTU GREETING AT THE PARISH OF SAINT THÉRÈSE IN JUANICÓ

Good morning and happy Sunday! You may not know it, but I am indeed very happy to be here for this brief moment at the Parish of Saint Thérèse. This is the first parish in Uruguay dedicated to her following her canonization. My family —especially my father — had a great devotion to Saint Thérèse. And so, being able visit here on this feast day — as you know, we are on our way to Florida to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three — is a moment of devotion, a moment of gratitude, a moment to recognize that God's grace, God's love, is always with us; and that God is with us at all times, whether in moments of joy or when we suffer, perhaps due to illness, pain and so many difficulties.

Let us ask for the Lord's blessing upon each one of you and your families; you have brought rosaries and devotional objects, and we bless them as well at this moment. And let us ask the Lord to help us all grow in faith, to live our faith courageously, and not to be afraid to say, "I am a Christian, I am a Catholic, I believe in Jesus Christ." Jesus has given us a life that teaches us how to live well — by serving others, walking together, seeking God's presence, and sharing the joy of being Christians with everyone.

May the Lord be with you. [...]

Blessed be the name of the Lord. [...]

Our help is in the name of the Lord. [...]

May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down upon upon you. Congratulations, have a wonderful day, and a happy Sunday!

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters of this land of Uruguay,

With great enthusiasm, I am here with you today next to Our Lady of the Thirty-Three. I come as a pilgrim to share in the faith and the tenderness with which the Uruguayan people have looked at the Mother of God for generations. I say to those who have come from different places, to those

who have been making the pilgrimage here for years, and to those who are visiting for the first time today: I embrace all of you with affection and entrust you to Mary's protection.

Today, the word of God presents us with two women who lived in very different times and upon whom almost the same blessing is bestowed. To Judith, after the liberation of her people, it was said: "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth" (*Jud* 13:18). Many centuries later, Elizabeth welcomes Mary into her home and exclaims: "Blessed are you among women" (*Lk* 1:42).

This connection was recognized very early on by Christian tradition. In Judith, it saw a woman who did not allow herself to be overcome by fear at a difficult time for her people. Through prayer and fasting, she made a decision that led her to risk her own life (cf. *Jud* 8-10). When victory came, Judith did not take credit for it, for she knew full well who had saved Israel, and said: "Begin a song to my God with tambourines, sing to my Lord with cymbals" (*Jud* 16:1). That is why the words with which her people welcomed her are so majestic: "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the great boast of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation!" (*Jud* 15:9). The people celebrated what God had done for them through Judith.

Hearing these words today before the Patroness of this country has a special resonance. This small image is linked to a decisive moment in Uruguay's history. In 1825, those who were fighting for the freedom of this land also turned to Mary, to place the beginning of their efforts under her protection. That gesture reminds us that the history of peoples, too, cannot be fully understood without reference to God. Thus, from the earliest days of the nation's founding, Uruguay has been intimately linked to a Mother. Since that time, generations have come and gone, circumstances have changed, including the relationship of many Uruguayans to the faith. Yet she has remained here. While Mary accompanied the history of this people, at the same time in so many homes other women preserved the faith and passed it on to their children.

I think of the mothers who placed the first words of prayer on their children's lips, who took them to be baptized, who prepared them to receive the sacraments, and who taught them to live out Christian charity. I think of the

grandmothers who kept an altar at home, who prayed for the living and the deceased and who made God present in the ordinary events of life. Even in the early days of the Church we find something similar. Timothy's faith was rooted in two women, with the Apostle fondly recalling Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. In them, "sincere faith" had first taken root, which Paul also recognized in Timothy (cf. *2 Tim* 1:5). Scripture tells us little about those two women. We know, however, that Timothy, who would become a close collaborator of Saint Paul, was formed by that faith learned at home (cf. *Acts* 16:1-3).

This land also has women's names inscribed in its history of faith. Among them is Saint María Francisca Rubatto, who chose to remain among you and serve those most in need here. There are also the Blessed Martyrs Dolores and Consuelo Aguiar-Mella, two sisters born in Montevideo. Their lives were very different, but in all three we find supreme examples of faithfulness.

Yet most of this history of faith in the country was never written down in books. It was quietly passed down from generation to generation within families. When we wonder and ask where our faith comes from, the name of a specific woman often comes to mind: a mother, a grandmother, a godmother, a religious sister or a catechist. We may not remember every word they said to us, but we do remember how they prayed, how they spoke of the Lord and with what conviction they lived out what they taught us.

“Yet most of this history of faith in the country was never written down in books. It was quietly passed down from generation to generation within families.

Today I would like to thank all of those women. Thank you for having believed and for having kept open a path to God in so many families. Some were able to do so supported by a long-standing family tradition; others had

to sustain that faith with greater effort, perhaps without always finding understanding or support within their own homes. I know that many of you carry a very specific sorrow. You taught your children to pray, and today they no longer do so. You used to attend Mass together, and it has been years since they entered a church. You spoke to your grandchildren about God, and now you do not know if those words left a mark. Sometimes you wonder if you did something wrong or if it was all futile. Allow me to recall Saint Monica here, who knew that pain well. She prayed for years for a son who seemed to be drifting further and further from God, but she never stopped trusting in his grace. Therefore, do not consider what you have sown to be lost. The Lord himself taught us that the seed can grow without the sower knowing how (cf. *Mk* 4:27).

“Allow me to recall Saint Monica here, who knew that pain well. She prayed for years for a son who seemed to be drifting further and further from God, but she never stopped trusting in his grace. Therefore, do not consider what you have sown to be lost.

Mothers and grandmothers: never tire of passing on the faith! Preach with your lives as well as with your words. Insist on prayer, love, and hope; insist on them in season and out of season (cf. *2 Tim* 4:2). Do so with patience, without harshness or discouragement. Even if your loved ones seem far from God, continue to place them before him. Do not stop blessing them, accompanying them, and simply reminding them of what they once received. There are doors that you cannot open, but God can.

“There are doors that you cannot open, but God can.

I would also like to address the men — fathers and grandfathers. Your children and grandchildren need to see that the faith occupies a genuine place in the lives of the men in your family. Imitate Saint Joseph, who took on the task of raising Jesus, bringing him to the temple, teaching him to work honestly and showing him that God must come first in a person’s life. Dear fathers and grandfathers, young people need to see that you pray, receive the sacraments, treat your wives with respect, ask for forgiveness and live with integrity, even when doing so requires sacrifice. Children learn a great deal by seeing that their father can kneel before God without feeling that he is any less of a man for doing it.

Scripture called on God’s people to keep the words they have received from him in their hearts and to teach them to their children, to speak of them “when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise” (*Deut* 6:7). God was central to conversation, decision making and daily family life. In this way, children learned that the faith they received from their parents was also what their parents lived by. Likewise today, bishops, priests and consecrated persons are also called to support families in this task, generously exercising their spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, accompanying those who falter and helping many to rediscover the path to God.

Passing on the faith means bringing others to Christ, whom we ourselves have encountered. Mary shows us precisely how to do this. In the Gospel, Elizabeth welcomes her exclaiming: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (*Lk* 1:42). Mary does not keep that praise to herself. When Elizabeth proclaims her blessed, Mary responds by singing of the Lord’s greatness (cf. *Lk* 1:46-55). At Cana, when others turn to her, she directs them to her Son: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5).

In the second reading, Saint Paul explicitly states a truth that Mary's entire life proclaims: "There is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human" (*1 Tim* 2:5). All of Mary's greatness is based on her relationship with Christ: she welcomes him, lives by him, and leads others to him. An encounter with the Master is the goal of all evangelization and of all authentic Marian devotion. The Son of God has given himself up for all; thus, no one can be excluded from the Church's prayer. That is why Saint Paul asks us to pray "for kings and all who are in high positions" (*1 Tim* 2:2), and for all people, because God "desires everyone to be saved" (*1 Tim* 2:4).



All of Mary's greatness is based on her relationship with Christ: she welcomes him, lives by him, and leads others to him.

On this feast of the Patroness of Uruguay, let us bring this entire people before the Lord. Let us pray for those who bear the responsibility of governing it, that they may seek with integrity the good of all; for families, for young people, for those who suffer, for those who feel far from God and for those who need to return to him and change their lives.

Saint Luke shows us how that mission begins. After conceiving the Son of God, Mary "set out and went with haste" (1:39). She does not wait for Elizabeth to come looking for her, but rather goes out to meet her and enters her home, carrying the Lord with her. There, the child leaps for joy, and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. *Lk* 1:41-44). Mary's action also points out the way for us. We cannot always wait for those who have strayed to return on their own. People of Uruguay: you must set out on the journey! You must enter people's homes once more, draw near to them, listen to their questions and bring them to Christ! Each of you knows a person toward whom you need to take that step: perhaps a child, a friend, a neighbor, someone who stopped believing long ago or who has never had anyone close to them to speak to them about God.

> **People of Uruguay: you must set out on the journey! You must enter people's homes once more, draw near to them, listen to their questions and bring them to Christ!**

May the Queen of Heaven sustain those who continue to sow the faith. May she teach us to recognize Christ in the poor, the sick and those who are alone, and teach us to bring him to places where he is not yet known.

Soon I will place the Golden Rose before this image. With this gesture, I wish to honor the one who is indeed "the great pride of our nation" (*Jud* 15:9) and to make visible the fulfillment of the words she herself spoke: "All generations will call me blessed" (*Lk* 1:48).

To Mary, commander and guide of this people, I wish to consecrate this nation anew, to entrust this land and all who live in it to her protection and to implore God that, through her powerful intercession, he may thwart the works of the evil one and preserve beloved Uruguay from whatever might lead it away from Christ. May this Golden Rose, offered as a sign of veneration and filial love, also remind her children that they are called to imitate her by loving Christ as she loved him, and bringing him to others as she brought him. Amen.

WORDS OF THANKS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV AT THE CONCLUSION OF HOLY MASS

At the conclusion of this Eucharistic celebration, and before saying farewell to this beloved country, I wish to thank all the people who made my visit possible. I thank the civil and religious authorities, the groups that organized each event, the volunteers, the families and communities who came together and worked to make it possible for us to share these days together, as well as the people who have accompanied us through the various means of communication. I had been told that, although Uruguay is a relatively

small country, its people have generous hearts and are capable of great things. That has become evident over these past few days. You have prepared everything so well, and I express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

We have gladly shared the joy of faith in Christ, and we have witnessed how this joy has grown with each passing day. May what we have experienced in Montevideo, in Paysandú and here in Florida spread to the rest of the country and the world. Such is the mathematics of faith: what we have received and freely offer, with God's grace, multiplies, opens new horizons and enriches our lives, giving them new meaning. Dear brothers and sisters of Uruguay, help faith, hope and charity to continue growing. Keep living and proclaiming the joy that springs from our encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ and you will have, as a result, a full and fruitful life.

Such is the mathematics of faith: what we have received and freely offer, with God's grace, multiplies, opens new horizons and enriches our lives, giving them new meaning.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of the Thirty-Three, I ask God to bless the Uruguayan people and to guide them along paths of unity and peace. I carry you in my heart and I ask that you continue to accompany me with your prayers. Thank you very much, Uruguay!

THE AUGUSTINIAN KEY

The child of so many tears

> **Go your way, and God bless you; it cannot be that the son of these tears should perish.**
>
> A bishop to Saint Monica, in Confessions, III, 12, 21

Monica, Augustine's mother, appears in the homily as a consolation for so many mothers and grandmothers who pray for those who have drifted away. This is how a bishop spoke to her in her anguish: persevering prayer is never lost, even when we do not see the fruit.



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