

MEDIA BRIEFING



POPE FRANCIS
SERVANT OF HOPE
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POPE FRANCIS IN MOROCCO, AN HISTORIC VISIT

At the invitation of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI and the Bishops of Morocco, Mgr Cristóbal López Romero, Archbishop of Rabat, and Mgr Santiago Agrelo Martínez, Archbishop of Tangier, His Holiness Pope Francis will travel to Rabat, Morocco for an apostolic journey from March 30 to 31st, 2019.

With the underlying theme “Servant of Hope”, Pope Francis’ first visit to the Maghreb will be framed by the overarching goal of developing interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding between the faithful of the two religions, and promoting the values of peace and tolerance. It will begin with a meeting between His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, the Commander of Believers (Amir Al Mouminine) and His Holiness, Head of the Catholic Church.

Highly symbolic, this year being the 800th anniversary of the encounter between St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan al-Malik al-K'mall, who initiated the desire for dialogue and the establishment of harmonious relations between Catholicism and Islam.

As another symbol, this visit coincides with the Jubilee of the 800 years of the Franciscan presence in Morocco (1219 - 2019).

Thirty-four years after the visit of John Paul II in the Kingdom (August 19, 1985), this new historic visit of His Holiness will include a significant interfaith forum. A moment that will allow this message of peace between Christians and Muslims to live on and which will confirm the tradition of welcome and understanding that has characterized the relations of the Kingdom of Morocco with the Catholic Church for centuries.

An apostolic visit which is also placed under the theme of the needed solidarity with migrants, in a country which very early on adopted a dignified and courageous welcome policy. This is an opportunity to reaffirm Pope Francis’ support of the United Nations’ Global Pact on migration adopted in Marrakech last December and to once again call on the international community to behave responsibly, with solidarity and compassion towards migrants.

Lastly, this apostolic journey will also be marked by the Sovereign Pontiff’s meeting with Christians living in Morocco, in perfect harmony and freedom of worship, in peace, tolerance and fraternity.

The pope is the bishop of Rome and the head of the Catholic Church. His authority is exercised through the Vatican State, of which he is the monarch. He is elected, after the death or resignation of his predecessor, by cardinal electors who meet in conclave to deliberate and vote. The Pope’s authority in the Church has been transmitted by direct succession since the Saint Peter Apostle, having received it himself, directly from Jesus Christ.

The pope exercises his magisterium with all the bishops, successors of Apostles, whose college he presides. This magisterium works to send the authentic message of Christ and to ensure the unity of faith and the Church.

The current pope is Jorge Mario Bergoglio, elected on March 13, 2013, under the name of Francis and who succeeds Benedict XVI. He thus became the 266 Pope.

PROGRAM OF POPE FRANCIS' APOSTOLIC VIST TO MOROCCO

MARCH 30 & 31 2019

The Holy Father arrives on Saturday, March 30 at 2pm at the Rabat-Salé airport. His Majesty the King Mohammed VI will greet him, and they will both walk through the guard of honor to the VIP lounge of the airport where His Majesty will offer milk and dates to His Holiness, according to Moroccan tradition of welcome.

2:15 pm: His Majesty and the Holy Father travel by car and papamobile to the esplanade of Hassan Tower.

2:40 pm: His Majesty welcomes the Holy Father to the esplanade of the Hassan Tower, where they meet the diplomatic corps, the Moroccan people and civil society and salute them. His Majesty the King delivers a speech to which the Holy Father responds with his own address.

Then His Majesty and His Holiness go to the Mausoleum Mohammed V. They bow to the graves of Mohammed V and Hassan II to which His Holiness offers flowers before writing a message in the guestbook.

4:25 pm: His Majesty welcomes the Holy Father to the royal palace. Before arriving at the Royal Cabinet His Majesty Mohammed VI and the Holy Father receive the honors of the Royal Guard. After the presentation of the royal family and the exchange of donations, they have a private interview of about thirty minutes.

5:10 pm: The Holy Father and His Majesty go to the Mohamed VI Institute of Imams Morchidines and Morchidates. The Minister of Habbous and Islamic Affairs, the director of the Institute and the Secretary General of the League of Mohammedan Scholars will lead them to the auditorium where they will preside over a meeting with the Institute's students. The Minister of religious affairs will give a speech, then a European student and an African student will share their experiences. Religious songs of Hebrew, Muslim and Christian traditions will then be performed.

6:10 pm: The Holy Father will go to the CARITAS headquarters of Rabat's diocese. He will be greeted by the Archbishop of Tangiers and will meet migrant people and those who take care of them. A migrant will share his experiences. The Pope will give a speech, then young migrants will give short musical performance.

7 pm: The pope will join the Apostolic Nunciature for the rest of the evening.

8 pm: The Vatican delegation will be received at the Royal Guests' Palace for a dinner offered by His Majesty.

SUNDAY, 31st

9:30 am: The Holy Father will visit the rural social service of Temara held by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (private visit)

10:35 am: At Saint Peter's Cathedral in Rabat, His Holiness will meet priests, those in holy orders and representatives of Christians of other denominations. He will be greeted by a priest (Father Germain Goussa) and a nun (Sister Mary Donlon); he will give a speech and symbolically greets the eldest nun and the eldest priest of the diocese. He will then pray the Angelus which is broadcast, every Sunday, all over the world. The ceremony will last approximately 1 hour.

After his private meal at the Apostolic Nunciature, the Holy Father will go to the Prince Moulay Abdallah sports complex where Mass will be held.

2.45 pm: Mass will be solemnly presided over by the Holy Father who will give the homily. 500 chorists from all over the Kingdom will accompany the prayer of the congregation, which is expected to be between 7,000 to 10,000 participants.

4.30 pm: At the end of Mass, the Holy Father will leave the sports complex for the airport where he will be greeted by His Majesty's Delegate.

MEANING OF THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THIS APOSTOLIC VISIT

MEETING WITH THE FAITHFUL

The Commander of the Faithful Mohammed VI invites the Holy Father to Morocco for a meeting between believers, in the same way that the sultan of Damietta Malik al-Kâmil received Francis of Assisi, 800 years ago, during the Crusades.

Thanks to their meeting, Jewish, Muslim and Christian believers will meet at the foot of the Hassan Tower, with the common goals of building a more fraternal world and mitigating climate change.

In his visit to the Mohammed VI Imams' Training Institute, the Pope, who is engaged in his own work of reform in the Catholic Church, might be considered to support the King of Morocco's desire for reform.

MEETING WITH MIGRANTS

We remember that Pope Francis' first trip outside the Vatican was to pay tribute to the migrants who drowned in the Mediterranean, and to pray for them: it was in Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily, on July 8, 2013. Morocco has taken courageous humanitarian decisions with regard to how she will treat those migrants who enter the country. The Pope will take time to meet with some of these migrants and to share with them how the love of Christ compels the Church to reach out to them. This is expressed in 4 verbs: "welcome, protect, promote and integrate." (Speech to International Forum "Migration and Peace" participants, February 21st 2017)

THE PAPAL MASS

The conclusion and summit of this apostolic journey, the mass will be centered upon the parable of the Father and his two sons (Gospel according to Luke 15, 11-32) in line with the constant preaching of Pope Francis on the mercy of God... which parallels the Muslim faith's own acclamation of the "most clement and merciful God", invoked on the beginning of every surah of the Holy Qur'an. The mass will be celebrated in the Prince Moulay Abdellah sports complex covered stadium at the southern entrance of Rabat, which has car parking for 5000 vehicles, it will bring together the Catholic community of the Kingdom and all the friends of the Catholic Church. 7,000 to 10,000 participants are expected. The choirs from all the Moroccan parishes will lead this mass, which has been prepared by a team coordinated by the brother Manuel CORULLON FERNANDEZ, custodian of the Franciscans in Morocco.

MOROCCO AND THE VATICAN, A CLOSE AND SOLID RELATIONSHIP

Diplomatic relations between Morocco and the Holy See were established in 1976. They formalized hundreds of years of relations between Moroccan sovereigns and the Catholic Church, going back to the time of the Almoravids (1061-1147). Since then, this historic relationship has been marked by dialogues and exchanges between the Vatican and Morocco.

In 1980, King Hassan II paid an official visit to the Vatican, the first visit made by a Muslim Head of State to the Supreme Pontiff in Rome.

In 1984, a royal Dahir confirms the status of the Catholic Church in the Moroccan Kingdom and its right to exercise freely and publicly its own activities, especially those relating to worship, the magisterium, internal jurisdiction, charitable actions of its faithful and religious education, thus creating a legislative framework for peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Catholics.

In 1985, Pope John Paul II pays an historic visit to Morocco, marked by an inter religious meeting with 80,000 young Muslims in the Casablanca stadium, inviting Christians and Muslims to get to know each other better and to build peace.

In 1997, Morocco opens an embassy near the Holy See, consolidating diplomatic relations between the two states.

In 2000, His Majesty King Mohammed VI pays an official visit to the Vatican City and speaks with Pope John Paul II.

In August 2018, His Majesty King Mohammed VI appoints Raja Naji Mekkaoui as the new ambassador of the Moroccan Kingdom to the Vatican. Ms. Mekkaoui is a lawyer by training, a Muslim theologian, a member of the League of Mohammedan Scholars and an expert in inter-religious dialogue.

In Morocco, Monsignor Vito Rallo is an ambassador of the Vatican Apostolic Nunciature in Rabat, the diplomatic representative of the Vatican. The Apostolic Nunciature in Rabat was opened in 1988 and is one of the 115 diplomatic and consular representations of the Holy See, in the world.

Pope Francis' visit to Morocco attests to the excellent diplomatic relations between Morocco and the Holy See and the shared desire to develop intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MOROCCO, AN ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING

The presence of Christianity in North Africa goes back to the end of the second century and we find ancient traces, before the arrival of Islam, in Tangier (Tingis), Asilah (Zilis), Ceuta (Septem), Larache (Lixus), Tetouan (Tamuden-sis), Salé (Salensis) ... After the establishment of Islam in the Maghreb, small Christian communities survived until the thirteenth century, in some places, despite the gradual disappearance of the ecclesiastic hierarchy.

In 1219, during St. Francis of Assisi's very lifetime, the first Franciscans entered Morocco, at the Sultan of Marrakech's request, to ensure his captives' freedom of worship. In 1225, the Holy See appointed for the territories under Almohad domination, a Dominican bishop. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, Spanish missionaries continued to exercise their apostolate among Christian captives.

Following the rapid expansion of the Catholic Church, in 1923 Pius XI created two Apostolic Vicariates: one with headquarters in Rabat, for the French Protectorate zone, and another in Tangier, for the Spanish Protectorate zone and the Tangier international zone. Resident General Lyautey made sure that the Church respected Morocco's "protectorate" status and did not seek to make Muslims become Christians. In 1955, 200 churches or chapels were available to the 500,000 Europeans in Morocco.

During the period preceding Morocco's independence, the Church of Morocco, through a letter from its bishop, Monsignor Lefèvre, took a stand supporting the will of the Moroccan people regarding sovereignty, and stressed the need for development in the country. The right to independence was then implicitly considered just by the Church. The Sultan approved the letter himself and invited Archbishop Lefèvre to the Enthronement Day on November 18, 1952, where he claimed independence. It was the first time in the history of Morocco that the apostolic vicar of Rabat was a guest at the Moroccan national holiday.

In the 60s and 70s, an intense work of inter religious dialogue took place. A particularly important event in the history of the Church in Morocco and the Islamic-Christian dialogue was Pope John Paul II's visit to Casablanca on August 19, 1985 and his memorable meeting in Casablanca with 80,000 young Moroccans at the Mohammed V stadium.

But the years 75 to 90 also saw the massive departure of Christians from Morocco with the departure of many religious congregations and the closing of many churches, sometimes demolished or sold, but mostly handed over to the State's private domain, for which both the dioceses and the Moroccan authorities ensured that they became a cultural or community space. Twelve boarding schools for Catholic children became Moroccan schools following the Moroccan school system.

Following the dynamics of the Second Vatican Council, ecumenical relationships developed among the Anglican, Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical churches, resulting in the creation of a Council of Christian Churches in Morocco, and the Al Mowafaqa Institute in 2012.

The Protestant Church also finds its place in Morocco, the first Protestant Church having been founded in 1874 in Essaouira/Mogador. By the middle of the 19th century, an Anglican community was established, building a non-Muslim cemetery around 1850 and erecting, in 1906 in Casablanca, the Saint John's church, which still exists.

In 1913, the first organized French Protestant community is formed in Casablanca. The first temples are built in the 1920s to 30s, and the Reformed French Evangelical Church in Morocco receives its legal status by the April 19th 1926 Royal Decree. In 1959 Protestants name their Church the Evangelical Church of Morocco.

Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches were also erected in Casablanca and Rabat, following the, severe political upheaval of 20th century Europe.

THE STATUS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MOROCCO

In 1984, His Majesty King Hassan II, recalling the spirit of brotherly understanding that has always characterized the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Morocco, gives a status to the Catholic Church of Morocco by royal Dahir (provision with legislative force), allowing them to exercise their spiritual mission publicly and freely and to ensure their own activities - such as worship, magisterium, internal jurisdiction, beneficence, religious education and assistance to prisoners - in favor of their faithful, providing them freedom to believe and live their faith in a society concerned with coexistence and collaboration.

The status thus granted to the Catholic Church also includes the right to establish associations for confessional, educational and charitable purposes, as well as the right of access to prisoners of Catholic faith.

This status marks the royal seal's desire to "institutionalize" peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Catholics and demonstrates Morocco's commitment to the dialogue between religions and the values of brotherhood and interfaith harmony.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, TODAY MORE ALIVE THAN EVER

The Church in Morocco is very active and includes a growing number of Christians of foreign origin. Its dynamism mostly recognized through its activity in the fields of education and development, as well as the presence of many religious communities.

Thanks to the agreements concluded between the Moroccan State and the States of Sub-Saharan Africa, and to the central position that Morocco wishes to occupy within the African Union, over the past 15 years many students have been welcomed in Moroccan higher education institutions. Among these sub-Saharan students are a large number of Christians. Their presence have given a new impetus to the Church of Morocco, which today numbers around 30,000 Christians, including 20,000 Catholics and 10,000 Protestants, with an age average of 35.

The Church in Morocco is subdivided into two dioceses: the diocese of Tangiers, of which Mgr. Santiago AGRELO MARTINEZ is the archbishop, is composed of five parishes located in northern Morocco; the diocese of Rabat, whose archbishop is Mgr. Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMERO, is composed of 32 parishes located in the rest of Morocco.

Faced with the arrival of these Christians, the dioceses have developed many parish activities; such as choirs, catechesis for adults and children, high school chaplaincy and Scouting with the Unified Scouts in Morocco (SUM).

Discipleship groups have also been created, such as the Teams of Our Lady for Christian Couple Encounters, the Life and Faith-MIAMSI for Young Workers and the Chaplaincy of Catholic Students in Morocco (AECAM).

Finally, prayer groups have been set up, including the Charismatic Renewal.

At the same time, the Church has also developed what are known as "social works". This expression of solidarity reaches out to a wide range of people. Thus, the Church is engaged with the Catholic prisoners thanks to the prison chaplains who visit them. It also focuses on supporting women through, for example, women's training centers, that exist in Mohammedia, where women take French lessons or literacy classes but also sewing and embroidery classes. At last, the Church gives a very important place to literacy and education in general, especially through the Saint Antoine Center in Meknes, a language learning center and computer skills training for all at minimal cost.

This dynamic activity of the Catholic Church is possible thanks to all the religious communities present in Morocco. Religious men and women live in close proximity to the populations to which they are sent and are at their service, serving them in the areas of health and education. Other communities have more contemplative vocations: the Poor Clares in Casablanca, the Carmelites in Tangier and the Trappists in Midelt.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN MOROCCO (E.C.A.M)

Catholic Education In Morocco (E.C.A.M) today has about 12,000 students and 850 employees in fifteen schools in the diocese of Rabat, in the cities of Marrakech, Casablanca, Mohammedia, Rabat, Kenitra, and Meknes.

The E.C.A.M consists of 5 colleges, 11 primary schools and 11 preschools, as well as two women's training centers and one technical and vocational school.

The E.C.A.M institutions were founded by religious congregations during the period of the French protectorate in Morocco. The oldest establishment is located in Casablanca and dates from 1913. Originally, these establishments provided a French style of education and welcomed mostly European children.

After independence In Morocco, as the number of Europeans gradually decreased, the archdiocese of Rabat and the religious congregations wondered whether to send religious teachers to other schools or to close the schools. The decision was finally taken to keep these schools with Moroccan leadership in order to contribute to the education and training efforts being undertaken by the Morocco government.

This choice gradually provoked the "Moroccanization" of the programs, the teaching staff and the directions. Today, more than 98% of students and almost all teachers are Moroccans of Muslim faith.

A convention was also signed between the E.C.A.M and the Moroccan Ministry of Education, requesting that the establishments of the E.C.A.M. follow the main orientations of the educational system of this ministry, while nevertheless insisting on the learning of the French language. The goal of the E.C.A.M is, however, that students are perfectly bilingual Arabic / French at the end of the primary cycle.

Scientific subjects are taught in the Arabic language at primary level, as is the case in public institutions in Morocco, but since the start of the 2018 school year, they are taught in French from the first year of secondary school.

Pedagogically, all schools follow a common line whose principles are written in the book "Our Educational Project", written jointly by the directors of institutions and the secretary general of ECAM in a bilingual version Arabic / French .

This educational project focuses on the dignity of the human person, the development of the child in the human community to which he belongs, the learning of life skills in society based on the values of justice, peace and concern for the other and finally the development of an active teaching method allowing the child to be an active participant in their own educational formation.

For more information: www.sg-ecam.org

ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS

Morocco has now become a transit point to Europe and a host country for a growing number of undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. It is estimated that there are 80,000 sub-Saharan migrants today in Morocco.

The Church of Morocco, through its social service Caritas Morocco supports migrants who are often poor and in very precarious situations. The action carried out in support of these people aims to promote their rights, by assuring their access to public services (health, education, civil status) or to facilitate their integration in Morocco, and, for those who wish it, (vocational training, employability). It's fundamental approach is to see them as people, without reducing them to social and political problems ...

Caritas welcomes any migrant person in a situation of vulnerability regardless of status, gender, nationality or religion, in its three centers located in Tangier, Rabat and Casablanca, but also in Meknes, Fez, Nador, Oujda or Marrakech. Historically, more than 25,000 migrant people have been accompanied by Caritas teams and more than 9,700 people have been received at the three Caritas centers in Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier between January 1 and December 31, 2018, including more than 2800 women.

Caritas is also present 'on the ground', in neighborhoods where migrants, often undocumented, are numerous, and in informal settlements in the forest, in northern Morocco. It is therefore a whole network of social action that coordinates the support work that is essential to help these vulnerable migrant communities; amongst whom there are more and more single women, pregnant or with dependent children, and also unaccompanied children.

Caritas welcomes people seeking to see each one as an individual. At our centers they are supported in a coordinated way; emergency assistance, access to public health care, access to Moroccan schools, professional training, social and psychological support, as well as information and advice on administrative procedures regarding residence, civil status or pregnancy monitoring. This is undertaken in connection with all public bodies and associations working in Morocco in the service of migrants.

What began spontaneously in 2005, in response to the emergency situation, became the Qantara program, a structured program of assistance to migrants with health, vocational training and psychological support.

The objective of the program is that migrants in Morocco can fully exercise their fundamental human rights, specifically this aims at:

- reducing the level of vulnerability of migrant people excluded from public services, through local interventions and appropriate support.
- promoting the access of migrant people to Moroccan public services through social mediation work.
- contributing to increasing the capacity of the various actors mobilized in the support of migrants, and working towards their coordination.

In addition to the institutional activity of Caritas, four pilot projects have been set up to promote the operational implementation of public policy in various sectors:

- The integration of allophone children into the Moroccan education system

- The protection of unaccompanied foreign minors (MNA)
- The economic integration of migrant people in vulnerable situations
- The accompaniment of local activists in projects for the support and mediation of migrant people

By following the operational developments of the National Strategy of Immigration and Asylum launched by the Moroccan government in 2014, and by partnering with the networks of the organizations mobilized on migration issues, Caritas is working to make concrete progress in respect of the rights of migrants.

Caritas Morocco - also works with poor Moroccan people, and works to strengthen Moroccan organizations in the areas of service to people with disabilities, and in rural development - employs 68 employees and collaborates with many volunteers, 8 of whom are paid expenses.

Caritas, an institution of the Catholic Church, is present in the Caritas Internationalis network in more than 160 countries in order to show solidarity with the most vulnerable people. In Morocco, as part of a Royal Dahir dating back to 1983, Caritas intervenes, through the commitment of its volunteers and its employees, in several regions and with some fifty civil society groups, through the programs of groups specialized in the care of persons with disabilities, in the improvement of agricultural practices in small farms and in the area of migrant support. Caritas in Morocco has been working with migrants since 2000.

MOROCCO, A LAND OF ECUMENISM

In Christian usage, ecumenism is the effort made by various Christian churches to rebuild the unity broken down over the centuries. Its origin comes from the prayer of Christ just before he enters his Passion: "Father, let them be one for the world to believe" (Jn 17,21)

Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, but also Orthodox, Greeks and Russians cohabit within a fervent Muslim community, and gradually relationships are being established... as well as the awareness that when in minority, the scandal of the division is even deeply felt.

But it is especially after the independence of the Kingdom and the "Moroccanization" of the country that there was a coming together, partly motivated by a fear of disappearance. A particular instance can be seen in the fusion of the Protestant and Catholic Scout movements, boys and girls, which joined together in the "Unified Scouting in Morocco" organization, still alive and well in Casablanca and Rabat. A Council of Christian Churches in Morocco meets regularly in Rabat bringing together Catholic, Evangelical, Anglican and Orthodox leaders.

The large influx of sub-Saharan students from the 1990s has multiplied the number of Protestant denominations, which unite together in the "Evangelical Church in Morocco". A concern for poor students and migrants in Morocco, leads the churches to work together in the spirit of Christian charity at the service of the poorest: as an example, Caritas and CEI work together to welcome migrants.

There is however, a new area of concern, Morocco is creating new universities throughout the country. Young people from many countries of the South of the Sahara come to study, among them Catholics and Protestants. How are we to serve them, when the number of priests and pastors is decreasing, and it is very difficult to bring more of them from outside the country?

The EEAM president, the Archbishop of Rabat, Samuel Amédro and Vincent Landel, in 2012, proposed to both of their church communities to give 4 to 5 years of their life to serve their Church, while receiving high quality theological training. A course which alternates class-based learning and practical placement - half-time studies, half-time ministry – already 12 young adults aged 23 to 40 have engaged in this service to the Catholic Church, while studying for a theological diploma awarded the Catholic Institute of Paris, in Rabat, whilst 7 new pastors have been able to be trained for the EEAM, with a degree in theology, from the Protestant Faculty of Strasbourg.

This ground-breaking approach of teaching Christian theologically ecumenically (each course is taught in tandem by both Catholic and Protestant teachers) and in the context of Islamic-Christian dialogue is the extraordinary mission of Al Mowafaqa – the Ecumenical Institute of Theology of Rabat. This institute also welcomes full-time degree candidates. The institute also offers an Erasmus-like immersive semester in Morocco on culture and religious dialogue, a ten-day long session of Islamic studies every July, long-term training for the pastors of the local house churches flourishing in Morocco engendered by the arrival of many migrants. Nearly 80 teachers work in partnership, from North and South, Protestants and Catholics, women and men, all working together to train all these candidates.

Many organizations and individuals contribute towards the financing of this institute. The current director is Pastor Jean Koulagna, who has been leading Al Mowafaqa since July 2018.

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TOUMLILINE'S SPIRIT... A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

This expression was revived by the "Memory for the Future" Foundation, created in Morocco in 2008. The foundation aims to "support projects that consolidate and disseminate a better knowledge of the country, as well as to foster actions in favor of a modern and tolerant Morocco". This led them to try and revive the memory of the Benedictine monastery Toumliline, founded in 1952, at the request of the apostolic vicar (soon to be archbishop) of Rabat, Mgr Louis-Amédée Lefèvre.

Coming from the Benedictine monastery of En-Calcat (France), 20 monks arrived in Azrou, in 1952, and built this place of prayer, work and hospitality expressing the spirit of the pastoral letter of Lent where Archbishop Lefèvre firmly reminded, all Christians of Morocco, of the precepts of justice taught in the Gospel; with particular focus on their relationship with the Moroccans, "whom they must not forget that they were, in truth, their hosts" and called upon Christians to understand the aspirations of Moroccans and to accept the necessary evolution of Morocco.

Under the leadership of their superior, Father Denis Martin, the monks learned Arabic and Berber, hired Moroccan workers to build the monastery and to work the land they had acquired. They opened a clinic and offered school support to children and young people living around them. Toumliline became a place of pilgrimage frequented by Moroccan Christian students who were already preparing for the spirit of Vatican II, evidenced in their beautiful prayer: "Lord, give us a humble and gentle soul so that every spirit of haughty superiority departs, and that our relations are always of brotherly simplicity; enlarge our hearts with an greater desire to understand and serve every man. Bring us joy, peace and friendship ...".

They put into practice the words of Archbishop Lefevre: "we must, more than ever, make our own the Christian ideal of justice and charity. We do not have the right to take sides. Let us not forget that our vocation is to be witnesses to Christ, and to love all our brothers without exception.

Young Moroccans often came to speak with the monks, and the monastery became a natural meeting place. This led Father Denis to instigate meetings between Christians and Muslims. These meetings drew people together across barriers of social class and political affiliation and attracted the participation of experts from all continents. During the summer of 1957, the first summer school was held. Prince Moulay Hassan proposed that the theme of education for the summer school, saying: "We will only succeed in carrying out our task if we give these people a healthy notion of education. "

His Majesty King Mohammed V received the participants (including Princess Lalla Aïcha, Dr. Benhima, Mr. Ben Barka, Mr. Louis Gardet, Father Mubarak and many academics) saying "Morocco is a country that has always practiced religious tolerance allowing many religions to enjoy freedom and dignity. Christianity and Islam live side by side in Morocco, working together in a climate of cooperation, friendship and serenity, and collaborating to realize the well-being and happiness of humanity by spreading religious teachings and calling people to the higher moral and humanitarian values these religions enshrine. "

Until 1968, when the monastery closed, the summer schools brought together hundreds of participants, with experts from Morocco and around the world, notably Massignon and René Rémond, contributing to dialogues on topics such as the city, economic development and humanism, the great currents of modern civilization, the meeting of cultures, all of this in a spirit of dialogue to help build the independent Morocco that we now know. In a sense, Toumliline acted as a laboratory, in which modern Morocco took shape. When Toumliline came to the end of its mission, it closed, but only after having founded two monasteries in Africa, one in Bouaké in Ivory Coast and another in Koubri in Burkina Faso, who keep alive the spirit of Toumliline.

BIOGRAPHY OF HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

The Argentine Jesuit, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, is the first American Pope. He is 83 years old and took the name Francis on becoming Pope. A renowned figure for the entire continent and an approachable and beloved pastor in his diocese. A diocese which he loved to visit using public transport during the 15 years of his episcopal ministry. "My people are poor and I am one of them," he has said repeatedly to explain his choice to live simply in an apartment and to prepare his own meals. He has always called his priests to have mercy, apostolic courage and to open the doors to all. The worst that can happen in the Church, he has said on several occasions, "is what de Lubac calls spiritual worldliness," which means "putting oneself in the center."

And when he discusses social justice, he first invites us to return to the catechism, to rediscover the ten commandments and the Beatitudes. His project is simple: if we follow the Christ, we understand that "trampling the dignity of a person is a serious sin".

Although a person of deep discretion – his official biography is only a few lines long – he became renowned for his forthright stance during the economic crisis that ravaged the country in 2001

He was born in the capital of Argentina on December 17, 1936, the son of Piedmontese emigrants. His father, Mario, is an accountant, working for the railways, while his mother, Regina Sivori, was a housewife and oversaw the education of her five children.

After gaining a qualification in Chemistry, he chose the path of priesthood by entering the diocesan seminary of Villa Devoto. On March 11, 1958, he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. He completed his studies in literature in Chile and in 1963, returned to Argentina and obtained a master's degree in philosophy at St. Joseph's College in San Miguel. Between 1964 and 1965 he was professor of literature and psychology at the Immaculate College of Santa Fe and, in 1966, he taught the same subjects at the College of the Savior in Buenos Aires. From 1967 to 1970 he studied theology and obtained a master's degree at St. Joseph's College.

He was ordained priest on December 13, 1969 by Archbishop Ramón José Castellano. He then continued his training with the Jesuits between 1970 and 1971 in Alcalà de Henares, in Spain, and on April 22, 1973 he took his perpetual vows. Returning to Argentina he became Master of Novices at Villa Barilari in San Miguel. He was also professor at the Faculty of Theology, Consultant for the Province of the Society of Jesus and rector of the college.

On July 31, 1973, he was appointed Provincial of the Jesuits of Argentina, a position he held for six years. He then resumed his work in academia and, between 1980 and 1986, he was again rector of St. Joseph College whilst still a priest in San Miguel. In March 1986 he went to Germany to complete his doctoral thesis; his superiors then sent him to the Savior College in Buenos Aires and then to the Company Church in the city of Cordoba, as spiritual director and confessor.

Cardinal Antonio Quarracino made him a trusted and close partner in Buenos Aires. Thus, on May 20, 1992, John Paul II appointed him titular bishop of Auca and auxiliary of Buenos Aires. On the 27th of June, he received episcopal ordination in the cathedral from the hands of the cardinal. He chose Miserando atque eligendo as his motto and inserts the Christogram IHS, symbol of the Society of Jesus, into his coat of arms.

He gave his first interview as a bishop to a small parish newspaper, "Estrellita de Belém". He was immediately appointed Episcopal Vicar of the Flores Zone and, on December 21, 1993, he was also appointed Vicar General

of the Archdiocese. It was therefore no surprise when, on 3 June 1997, he was promoted to Coadjutor Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Less than nine months later, on February 28th, 1998, on the death of Cardinal Quarracino, he succeeded him as Archbishop, Primate of Argentina; and Ordinary for the Eastern Rite community who are resident in the country and without their own Ordinary.

Three years later, during the Consistory of February 21 2001, John Paul II made him cardinal, assigning him the title of Saint Roberto Bellarmino. He discouraged people from going to Rome to see his investiture and invited them rather to give the money such a trip would have cost to the poor. Grand Chancellor of the Argentine Catholic University, he is the author of the books '*Meditaciones para religiosos*' (1982), '*Reflexiones sobre la vida apostolica*' (1986) and '*Reflexiones de esperanza*' (1992).

In October 2001, he was appointed Deputy General Rapporteur for the 10th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, devoted to the Episcopal Ministry. This was a task entrusted to him at the last moment, replacing Cardinal Edward Michael Egan, Archbishop of New York, who was forced to stay in his country because of the September 11 terrorist attacks. At the synod, he emphasized in particular the "prophetic mission of the bishop", his identity as "prophet of justice", his duty to "preach unceasingly" the social doctrine of the Church, but also to "express an authentic judgment in matters of faith and morality".

Meanwhile, in Latin America, he was becoming ever more popular. However, his character was unchanged, and neither was his rigorous lifestyle, which some would describe almost as "ascetic".

It is in this spirit that in 2002, he refused the nomination as president of the Argentine Episcopal Conference, but three years later, he was elected, then subsequently reconfirmed for a new triennium in 2008. In April 2005, he participated in the Conclave during which Benedict XVI was elected.

As Archbishop of Buenos Aires - a diocese with more than three million inhabitants - he formulated a missionary project centered on communion and evangelization. The four main objectives were: open and fraternal communities; the active participation of an engaged laity; evangelization reaching all the inhabitants of the city; assistance to the poor and the sick. It had as its aim to re-evangelize Buenos Aires, "taking into account those who live there, its configuration, its history." He invited priests and lay people to work together. In September 2009, he launched a national solidarity campaign on the bicentenary of the country's independence: 200 charitable actions to be completed by 2016. At the continent level he gave great hope following his message at the Conference of Aparecida in 2007, which is almost the *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Latin America.

Until the beginning of the papal vacancy, he was a member of the Congregations for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, for the Clergy, the Institutes of Religious Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life; of

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