

Pope Francis: “In the Midst of the People”



Our humanity is much enriched when we are with others in whatever situation they may find themselves. It is isolation that harms, not sharing. Isolation spreads fear and mistrust and stops us from rejoicing in brotherhood (and sisterhood). We really must tell each other that we are taking more risks when we isolate ourselves rather than when we open ourselves to the other: there is a much higher probability of hurting ourselves in closure and rejection than in encounter. The same is true when we get close to someone: I am thinking of a sick or elderly person, an immigrant, an unemployed or a poor person. When we take care of the other we end up complicating our own life far less than when we're just focused upon ourselves.

Being amongst people does not mean merely being open towards others but also letting others get close to us ... A relationship implies an exchange between people: experience tells us that we usually receive more than we give. Amongst our people there is real human wealth. There are countless stories of solidarity, help and support within our families and communities.

The dignity with which some people face economic hardship, pain, hard work and other challenges is

impressive. Meeting these people allows you to touch their greatness and receive a kind of light that makes it clear that it is possible to nurture hope for the future; you can believe that good is stronger than evil because of them. Being amongst people means we have access to the lessons of life.

Being amongst people also means experiencing that we are all part of a people. Everyday life is possible because it is not made of the sum of many individual elements, but of the joint effort of many people that come together to give life to the common good. Being together helps us see the whole picture ... When a people is separated from whoever is in power, when choices are made on the basis of power and not as a fruit of popular expression, when those in power consider themselves more important than the people and decisions are made by few, or are anonymous, or are always dictated by real or presumed emergencies, then social harmony is threatened with serious consequences: poverty increases, peace is jeopardised, money is in command and the people suffer. Being amongst people is good therefore not only for the life of the individual but for everyone.

Being amongst people highlights the plurality of colours, cultures, races and religions. People allow you to experience first-hand the richness and beauty of diversity ... When you're with people you touch humanity

Source: Pope Francis. Nov 2016. Video-message for Festival of Social Doctrine of the Church in Verona.

REFLECTION

- > Who are the people you are grateful to be ‘in the midst of’ in your family, workplace or community?