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MEETING FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLES
THE HUMAN PERSON: A STATE OF EMERGENCY
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Pope Francis: with the “Lumen fidei” to the suburbs of existence

Rimini, August 21 2013 - "Faith is the encounter with the living God; it is the space that God opens up in the world and in the human heart." With these words Father Stefano Alberto, Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, recaps the doctrinal content of the encyclical of Pope Francis, the subject of the meeting this morning at 11.15 am in the Auditorium D5. Together with Father Stefano Alberto, Guzmán Carriquiry, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, and José Maria "Pepe" by Paola, pastor of Villa 21 in Buenos Aires attended the meeting introduced by the journalist Alver Metalli.

The reference to the suburbs of existence holds one of the most frequent expressions by Bergoglio from the beginning of his pontificate. "He was a shepherd who physically visited our neighborhoods, reversing the perspective of a look, no longer facing the center of political and economic power of Buenos Aires, but towards the poorest suburb and abandoned." Thus the suburb has become the center of his pastoral mission, as told by Father Pepe, for over 20 years at Villa 21, sent there by Bergoglio as a sign of his love in the service of the poorest in a neighborhood forgotten by the state and even devoid of water and light. " On one hand The bishop Bergoglio invited the priests of his diocese to give value to the religiosity of people of the villas, and on the other to have a different look to the poors, considering them as people which learn from. That's why they feel him so close, a *villero!*".

These words reveal the deeper meaning of the apostolic mission of Pope Francis: a share and a deeper closeness to the human and spiritual needs of the people. Bergoglio knows what it means to fight alongside the poorest in order to regain the dignity trampled by drug traffickers and powerful people. "Bergoglio has doubled the number of priests who exercised their ministry in the villas, because he wanted priests working in community, in each of these neighborhoods, so that the projects carried out would produce fruit. We did not use sociological analysis, but the Gospel", Father Pepe tells. Not a theory on the needs, not a pauperism, but a call to charity and dialogue with everyone within the *libertas Ecclesiae* (the Church's freedom). According to Carriquiry, meeting, discipleship and mission are the guidelines of the of Bergoglio's ministry, firstly as

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bishop, and now as pope: "Providence had already prepared him for the papacy, but grace has rejuvenated him with a peace, a serenity and joy that can only come from his familiarity with Christ". Only the beauty of God gives meaning to the mission and the affection between Benedict XVI and Francis seems to be 'designed' by a really experienced love by Christ . After a great master of theology, the pastor pope is ready to make a real 'evangelical revolution', as Carriquiry underlines. By quoting Carron he states: "The mission is an attraction which is born from the wonder of the meeting. It is necessary to communicate the gift of the Christian meeting by "getting out" of self-sufficiency and self-referentiality, of self-pleased churches. In fact, the "getting out' is one of the most common expressions of his preaching. "

" Christian Meeting, look, walk, and memory" are the terms identified by Father Stefano Alberto as the core of Lumen fidei and of the ministry of Pope Francis. "Faith sees to the extent that it walks", strongly affirms the theologian paraphrasing the words of the Pope's encyclical letter. "Faith is a journey of the eye, the adventure of a new beginning in the space open by God." This approach is evident in the figure of Zacchaeus which wants to see Jesus, but he really can not see it till he is looked at by the Master, because he needs his look of love and forgiveness, because it is Him who always take first step and embraces us.

(C.C.)

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