



Visit to the “San Carlo” Rehabilitation Community

26/02/2016

Hospitality Center Don Mario Picchi

Via Pascolaro Marino 1 - Marino (Roma) - Italia



Pope Francis never ceases to amaze. His trip to Mexico was characterized by a strong and unequivocal denunciation of drug trafficking: “I am concerned about those many persons who, seduced by the empty power of the world, praise illusions and embrace their macabre symbols to commercialize death... I urge you not to underestimate the moral and antisocial challenge which the drug trade represents for the youth and for Mexican society as a whole, as well as for the Church”.

Only a few days after his return from Mexico, the Pope turned his words from the cathedral in Mexico City into a concrete and visible sign: “We Pastors of the Church cannot take refuge in generic condemnations, but should have a prophetic courage as well as a reliable and qualified pastoral plan to contribute, gradually, to weaving that delicate cloth of human relationships... Only by starting from families; by drawing close and embracing the human and existential peripheries of the ravaged areas of our cities; and by seeking the involvement of parish communities, schools, community institutions, the political communities, and institutions responsible for security; only in this way will people finally escape the raging waters that drown so many lives”. Following the conceptual thread that links these *Friday of Mercy*, the acts recalling the Works of Mercy that the Pope is carrying out during the Holy Year, this time Pope Francis showed up as a surprise at the door of the therapeutic Community “San Carlo” in the outskirts of Rome. The community, founded by Father Mario Picchi, is home to 55 guests who are making the journey out of drug addictions.

The surprise was universal. No one was expecting to see Pope Francis, and deep emotion touched everyone. The Pope wanted to remain with the youth; he listened to their stories and he made each one feel his closeness. He exhorted them not to let themselves be consumed by the "metastasis" of drugs, and embracing them, wanted to make them understand how much the path they have initiated in the community is a real opportunity to begin anew a life worthy of being lived. With this sign, therefore, the Pope wanted to call attention to the necessity of having constant faith in the force of Mercy, which continues to sustain our pilgrimage, and which, accompanying us even in our coldest hours, makes us feel the warmth of its presence and clothes human beings once again with their dignity.