
Pope Francis: to young priests and monks from Eastern Orthodox Churches, “seeds of faith and hope in regions marked by violence and war”

“A visit is always a sharing of gifts. The Churches carry with them a variety of gifts of the Spirit, to be shared for their mutual joy and benefit”. Pope Francis said this today as he received in audience the participants in the study visit of young priests and monks of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. “When we Christians from different Churches visit each other, meeting in the love of the Lord, we have the grace to exchange these gifts - the Pontiff added -. We can accept what the Spirit has sown in the other as a gift for us”. Referring to the visit by the Orthodox young monks and priests, the Pope said it was “not only an opportunity for them to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic Church, but also an opportunity for us Catholics to receive the gift of the Spirit that is in you”. “Your presence allows this exchange of gifts which is a source of joy for us”, he added. Pope Francis then gave thanks “for you, for the grace you have received in your lives and traditions, for saying ‘yes’ to the priesthood and to monastic life, and for the witness borne by your Eastern Orthodox Churches”. The Pope called the latter “Churches that have sealed their faith in Christ in blood and that continue to sow seeds of faith and hope, even in areas often tragically marked by violence and war”. Focusing on their visit to the capital, the Pontiff finally expressed the hope that “each of you has had a positive experience of the Catholic Church and the city of Rome, and that here you did not feel guests but brothers among brothers”. “May your presence become a small, fruitful seed that will bear fruit in visible communion between us, in that full unity that Jesus so ardently desires”.

