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## **Pope Francis: audience, among the banners also one saying “venimos de la periferia”**

The Pope arrived at the San Damaso courtyard at about 9.15 today; he stepped out of his car and walked along the barriers, behind which about 500 faithful taking part in today's general audience were standing, always keeping the social distancing required by the ongoing health emergency. The first gift he received from an elderly woman was a red rose with a long stem. He then performed the traditional zucchetto exchange, which he repeated twice along the way. “Long live the Pope!”, the crowd chanted, cheering him by clapping hands. Francis stopped to converse with some boys, and greeted at a distance with a kiss several children, perched on a barrier, supported by the loving arms of their parents. He also signed books and cards, and blessed the rosaries and some pictures. The Pope then stopped in front of a middle-aged couple, probably celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, blessing their wedding rings with a hand gesture. Among those cheering Pope Francis were also some Spanish-speaking pilgrims holding an eloquent banner: “Venimos de la periferia” (We come from the periphery). Today too, like last Wednesday, the pre-audience lasted longer than usual, over half an hour.

Valentina Bombelli