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World Youth Day 2016: Meeting With Civil Authorities

Pope Francis

Poland's memory and identity are the two catalysts that will lead the country forward and turn seemingly hopeless situations — such as those facing migrants — into opportunities for future generations, Pope Francis said in his first public remarks after arriving in Poland for World Youth Day. Addressing civil authorities and members of the country's diplomatic corps July 27 at Kraków's Wawel Castle, the pope noted that "memory is the hallmark of the Polish people." He said being aware of identity is "indispensable for establishing a national community on the foundation of its human, social, political, economic and religious heritage," but

"In the light of its 1,000-year history, I invite the Polish nation to look with hope to the future."

that people must remain open to renewal and to change. He added that while good memory can remind society of God and his saving work, bad memory keeps the mind and heart "obsessively fixed on evil, especially the wrongs committed by others." Pope Francis called on the people of Poland to hold on to their positive memories so they can look to the future with hope in respecting human dignity, economic and environmental concerns, and "the complex phenomenon of migration." The issue of migration, he added, "calls for great wisdom and compassion in order to overcome fear and to achieve the greater good." He said, "Also needed is a spirit of readiness to welcome those fleeing from wars and hunger, and solidarity with those deprived of their fundamental rights, including the right to profess one's faith in freedom and safety." Pope Francis spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his speech follows, copyright © 2016 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

offer a respectful greeting to his excellency the president, and I thank him for his gracious welcome and kind words. I am pleased to greet the distinguished members of government and parliament, the university rectors, the regional and municipal authorities as well as members of the diplomatic corps and the other authorities present.

This is my first visit to Central-Eastern Europe and I am happy to begin with Poland, the homeland of the unforgettable St. John

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