

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE BISHOPS OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF SLOVAKIA  
ON THEIR "AD LIMINA" VISIT**

*12 November 2015*

[Link](#)

[...] I meet you with joy, Pastors of the Church in Slovakia, during this ad limina visit in which you come to the Tombs of the Apostles, renewing your faith in Jesus Christ and your bond of communion with the Successor of Peter, thereby further deepening your sense of collegiality and mutual cooperation. I want to encourage you in the pastoral work that you are doing, even in the midst of all the current difficulties, characterized by rapid changes in so many spheres of human life and by the great challenge of globalization. At times the less populated countries feel threatened by this challenge, but at the same time it can also afford new opportunities. One such opportunity that has become a sign of the times is the phenomenon of migration, which needs to be understood and met with sensitivity and a sense of justice. The Church is called to proclaim and set an example of welcoming migrants in a spirit of charity and of respect for the dignity of the human person, in the context of the requisite observance of the law. [...]

[...] In facing the prospect of an ever more extensive multicultural environment, it is necessary to adopt an attitude of mutual respect in order to facilitate the encounter with migrants. It is to be hoped that the people of Slovakia retain their identity and their cultural heritage of ethical and spiritual values, strongly bound to their Catholic tradition. In this way they will be able to fearlessly open themselves up to confronting the wider continental and global horizon, contributing to a sincere and fruitful dialogue also on subjects of vital importance such as the dignity of human life and the essential role of the family. Today, more than ever, it is necessary to illuminate the journey of peoples with Christian principles, taking the opportunities offered by the current situation to develop an evangelization which, employing new expressions, can make Christ's message more comprehensible. For this reason it is important that the Church instil hope so that all the changes occurring today may be transformed into a renewed encounter with Christ, prompting your people to make authentic progress. The lay faithful, called to enliven temporal realities with the leaven of the Gospels, cannot shrink from also working within political processes destined for the common good. To be joyful witnesses of the Gospel in all areas they must feel that they are a vital part of the Church. It is your task to also recognize their role in the life of the ecclesial communities in the elaboration and implementation of pastoral projects. [...]