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LIBANO – BEIRUT – 02.12.2025 – 10.30

Holy Mass
at the “Beirut Waterfront”

Homily of the Holy Father

Official translation

Dear brothers and sisters!

At the end of these intense days, which we have joyfully shared together, we give thanks to the Lord for the many gifts of his goodness, his presence among us, the Word he abundantly offers us and for allowing us to be together.

As we have just heard in the Gospel, Jesus also had words of gratitude for the Father and, turning to him, prayed: “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (*Lk* 10:21).

However, praise does not always find a place within us. Sometimes, weighed down by the struggles of life, worried about the many problems around us, paralyzed by powerlessness in the face of evil and oppressed by so many difficult situations, we are more inclined to resignation and lamentation than to wonder and gratitude.

Dear people of Lebanon, I invite you to cultivate always an attitude of praise and gratitude. You are the recipients of a rare beauty with which the Lord has adorned your land. At the same time, you are witnesses and victims of how evil, in its various forms, can obscure this splendor.

From this esplanade overlooking the sea, I too can contemplate the beauty of Lebanon that is sung about in Scripture. The Lord planted his tall cedars here, nourishing and watering them (cf. *Ps* 104:16). He made the garments of the bride in the Song of Songs fragrant with the perfume of this land (cf. 4:11), and in Jerusalem, the holy city clothed in light for the coming of the Messiah, he announced: “The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will glorify the place where my feet rest” (*Is* 60:13).

This beauty, however, is overshadowed by poverty and suffering, the wounds that have marked your history. In this regard, I just visited the port in order to pray at the site of the explosion. The beauty of your country is also overshadowed by the many problems that afflict you, the fragile and often unstable political context, the dramatic economic crisis that weighs heavily upon you and the violence and conflicts that have reawakened ancient fears.

In such a scenario, gratitude easily gives way to disillusionment, songs of praise find no place in the desolation of the heart and hope is dried up by uncertainty and confusion.

The word of the Lord, however, invites us to find the small shining lights in the heart of the night, both to open ourselves to gratitude and to spur us on to a common commitment for the sake of this land.

As we have heard, the reason Jesus gives thanks to the Father is not for his extraordinary works, but because he reveals his greatness specifically to the little ones and to the humble, to those who do not attract attention and seemingly count for little or nothing and have no voice. The Kingdom that Jesus comes to inaugurate is marked, in fact, by the very characteristic described by the prophet Isaiah: it is a shoot, a small branch sprouting from a trunk (cf. *Is* 11:1). It is a small sign of hope that promises rebirth when everything else seems to be dying. Indeed, the coming of the Messiah was announced in the smallness of a shoot,

because he can only be recognized by the little ones, by those who humbly know how to recognize the hidden details and traces of God in a seemingly lost story.

It is also an indication for us, so that we may have eyes capable of recognizing the smallness of the shoot that emerges and grows even in the midst of a painful period. Even here and now, we can see small lights that shine in the night, small shoots that sprout forth and small seeds planted in the arid garden in this era of history. I think of your sincere and genuine faith, rooted in your families and nourished by Christian schools. I think of the constant work of parishes, congregations and movements to meet the questions and needs of the people. I think of the many priests and religious who devote themselves to their mission amid many difficulties, and of the lay people dedicated to charitable works and the promotion of the Gospel in society. For these lights that strive to illuminate the darkness of the night, and for these small and invisible shoots that nevertheless open up hope for the future, today we join Jesus in saying: "We praise you, Father!" We thank you because you are with us and do not let us falter.

At the same time, this gratitude must not remain an introspective and illusory consolation. It must lead us to a transformation of the heart, a conversion of life and a realization that God has made us precisely to live in the light of faith, the promise of hope and the joy of charity. As a result, we are all called to cultivate these shoots, to not be discouraged, to not give in to the logic of violence and the idolatry of money, and to not resign ourselves in the face of the spreading evil.

Everyone must do their part, and we must unite our efforts so that this land can return to its former glory. Disarming our hearts is the only way to do this. Let us cast off the armor of our ethnic and political divisions, open our religious confessions to mutual encounter and reawaken in our hearts the dream of a united Lebanon. A Lebanon where peace and justice reign, where all recognize each other as brothers and sisters, and, finally, where the words of the prophet Isaiah can be fulfilled: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion shall graze together" (*Is* 11:6).

This is the dream entrusted to you; it is what the God of peace places in your hands. Lebanon, stand up! Be a home of justice and fraternity! Be a prophetic sign of peace for the whole of the Levant!

Brothers and sisters, I too would like to repeat the words of Jesus: "I praise you, Father." I raise my gratitude to the Lord for having shared these days with you. While I carry your sufferings and hopes in my heart, I pray that this land of the Levant may always be illuminated by faith in Jesus Christ, the sun of justice. I likewise pray that through the grace of Christ, Lebanon will persevere in that hope that does not disappoint.
