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APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF POPE LEO XIV  
TO ALGERIA, CAMEROON, ANGOLA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA

(13–23 April 2026)

**MEETING WITH THE ALGERIAN COMMUNITY**

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV***

*Basilica of Our Lady of Africa (Algiers)*

*Monday, 13 April 2026*

**[Multimedia]**

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you!

*Dear brothers in the Episcopate,*

*Dear priests and deacons, men and women religious,*

*Beloved children of the Church in Algeria,*

It is with profound joy and fatherly affection that I meet with you today, you whose discrete and precious presence in this land is marked by an ancient heritage and by luminous witnesses of the faith.

Your community has deep roots indeed. You are the heirs of a host of witnesses who gave their lives, motivated by love for God and neighbor. I am particularly reminded of the nineteen men and women religious who were martyred in Algeria, choosing to stand alongside this people in its joys and sorrows. Their blood is a living seed that never ceases to bear fruit.

You are also heirs to a still more ancient tradition, dating back to the early centuries of Christianity. In this land resounded the fervent voice of Augustine of Hippo, preceded by the testimony of his mother, Saint Monica, and of other saints. Their memory shines as a call to be authentic signs of communion, dialogue and peace today.

To all of you, dear friends, and to those who are not able to be present but are following this meeting from afar, I express my gratitude for your daily commitment to manifest the maternal heart of the Church. I thank His Eminence for his words, and also Rakel, Ali, Monia and Sister Bernadette for what they have shared. In light of what we have heard, I would like us to pause and reflect together on three aspects of Christian life that I consider to be essential — particularly in light of your presence here: *prayer, charity and unity*.

First, *prayer*. We all need to pray. [Saint John Paul II](#) emphasized this when he told young people: "Man cannot live without prayer, any more than he can live without breathing" ([Meeting with Young Muslims in Casablanca](#), 19 August 1985, 4). He presented dialogue with God as indispensable — not only for the life of the Church, but also for each individual. Saint Charles de Foucauld also recognized this, and embraced his vocation as a prayerful presence. He wrote: "I am happy, happy to be before the Blessed Sacrament at all hours" (*Letter to Raymond de Blic*, 9 December 1907) and he urged others: "Pray much for others. Devote yourself to the salvation of your neighbor by every means in your power: by prayer, by goodness, by example" (*Letter to Louis Massignon*, 1 August 1916).

Regarding our need for prayer, Ali shared his experience of service at *Notre Dame d'Afrique*, where many come to enter into silence, to express their concerns, to pray for their loved ones, and to meet someone willing to listen to them so they can share the burdens they carry in their hearts. He noted that many find peace here and are happy to have come. Prayer unites, humanizes, strengthens and purifies the heart. Through prayer, the Church in Algeria sows humanity, unity, strength and purity, reaching places known only to the Lord.

The next aspect of ecclesial life that I would like to consider is that of *charity*. Sister Bernadette spoke to us about this in particular, in sharing her experience of supporting children with disabilities and their parents. From what she has shared, we have come to understand that mercy and service are about more than just providing material help to the weakest among us. Above all, such acts become an opportunity for grace, enabling everyone involved to grow and be enriched. Sister Bernadette explained how a simple, initial gesture of closeness — visiting the sick — blossomed first into a community center and then into an increasingly structured care organization. It has now become an authentic community, where many people share moments of joy and sorrow, united by bonds of trust, friendship and fellowship. Such an environment is life-giving and healing, and it is no surprise that those who suffer can find within it the resources they need to improve their health, while at the same time bringing joy to others, as in the case of Fatima.

After all, it is precisely love for their brothers and sisters that inspired the witness of the martyrs we have commemorated. In the face of hatred and violence, they remained faithful to charity even to the point of sacrificing themselves alongside many other men and women, Christians and Muslims. They did so without ostentation or fanfare, with serenity and steadfastness, neither falling into presumption nor despair, for they knew the One in whom they had placed their trust (cf. *2 Tim* 1:12). On behalf of all of them, we can recall the simple words of Brother Luc, the elderly monk and physician of the community of *Notre-Dame de l'Atlas*. When offered the possibility of leaving and saving himself from potential dangers, at the cost of abandoning his patients and friends, he replied: "I want to stay with them" (C. Henning - T. Georgeon, *Fratel Luc di Tibhirine. Monaco, medico e martire*, Vatican City 2025, Introduction), and so he did. On the occasion of their Beatification, [Pope Francis](#) spoke of him and all the others saying: "Their courageous witness is a source of hope for the Catholic community of Algeria and a seed of dialogue for the entire society. May this Beatification be for everyone an inspiration to build together a world of fraternity and solidarity" (8 December 2018).

And so we come to the third point of our reflection: our commitment to promoting *peace and unity*. The motto of this visit is drawn from the words of the risen Jesus: "Peace be with you!" (cf. *Jn* 20:21). In an inscription found among the mosaics of Tipasa, we read: "*In Deo, pax et concordia sit convivio nostro,*" which we could translate as: "In God, may peace and harmony reign in our life together." Peace and harmony have been fundamental characteristics of the Christian community from its very beginnings (cf. *Acts* 2:42-47), in accordance with Jesus' own desire (cf. *Jn* 17:23), who said: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (*Jn* 13:35). Saint Augustine, in this regard, affirmed that the Church "brings forth diverse peoples, but they are members of him whose body she is" (*Sermon* 192, 2), and Saint Cyprian wrote: "Our peace and brotherly agreement is the greater sacrifice to God — and a people united in one in the unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*The Lord's Prayer*, 23). It is beautiful, today, to hear such a rich variety of words and examples resonating in what we have heard.

As His Eminence mentioned, this very basilica is a sign of our desire for peace and unity. It symbolizes a Church of living stones, where communion between Christians and Muslims takes shape under the mantle of Our Lady of Africa. Here, the maternal love of *Lalla Meryem* gathers everyone as children, within our rich diversity, in our shared aspiration for dignity, love, justice and peace. All her children are eager to walk together, to live, pray, work and dream, since faith does not isolate, but opens us up; it unites us, but does not create confusion; it brings us closer, without homogenizing, and fosters true fraternity. This is what Monia told us. Rakel likewise shared the same sentiment in her testimony about her experience in the Tlemcen Fellowship. In a world where division and wars sow pain and death among nations, in communities, and even within families, your experience of unity and peace is a compelling sign. Together, you spread fraternity and inspire a deep longing for communion and reconciliation with a powerful and clear message that is borne in simplicity and humility.

A considerable part of this country's territory is desert, and in the desert, no one can survive alone. The hostile environment dispels any presumptions of self-sufficiency, reminding us that we need one another, and that we need God. When we acknowledge our fragility, our hearts become open to supporting one another and to invoking the One who can grant what no human power can ensure: the profound reconciliation of hearts and, with it, true peace.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, I encourage you to continue your work in Algeria as a cohesive and open community of faith, as a living presence of the Church, the “universal sacrament of salvation” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 48). Thank you for all that you do, for your prayer, your charity, and your witness to unity. I assure you of a remembrance in my own prayers before the Lord, and entrusting you to Mary, *Notre Dame d’Afrique*, I cordially bless you.

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