

Pope in Thailand: hospital visit will be remembered for life

In an interview to Vatican News, Father Surachai Chumsriphran, the director of St. Louis Hospital in Bangkok, Pope Francis' visit to the staff and patients on November 21 will linger in their memory for life.

By Robin Gomes

Pope Francis is currently on the 32nd foreign visit, taking him to Thailand and Japan, November 19-26. Thursday was his first full day in Thailand after he arrived in the capital, Bangkok, the previous day.

Among his several appointments on Thursday was a visit to St. Louis Catholic Hospital, where he met doctors, staff and patients.

Speaking to Marie Duhamel of Vatican News, hospital director, Father Surachai Chumsriphran said that the visit meant a lot to all those in the hospital. The visit by the head of the worldwide Catholic Church makes them realize and strengthen their mission, vision and core values of being a Catholic hospital.

The priest said that the Pope's visit will remain not only in their memory for years but also will be something special in the heart of the next generation. This papal visit will be part of history and help them maintain the mission of the hospital.

The mission of St. Louis Hospital, Fr. Chumsriphran said, is "spreading the Good News of Christ with love and compassion in physical and spiritual healing", aimed at the whole person.

Speaking about the hospital's core values, he said, they value the patient and his or her personal happiness and human dignity by providing them justice, love and community support. All these are intended to express the compassion and love of Christ to all patients, rich or poor.

Fr. Chumsriphran said that the hospital also has a foundation that provides free treatment to poor patients, which he said, comes from their heart and mind.

For the staff and patients who met the Pope, it has been a life experience that will be remembered for life. Ahead of the visit, the priest pointed out, one of them even said that before dying, he would want to see the Pope just once, even for a second or two.