

## **Pope tells young people not to be couch potatoes**

A video, recorded on a smartphone, offers words of encouragement to young people in Thailand who are gathered for a prayer vigil.

**By Linda Bordoni**

“Don't spend your life on the couch: go out and make something of it, work hard!”

Those are Pope Francis's first words to young people after his arrival in Bangkok. Stopping briefly in the atrium of the nunciature where he will be staying during his visit to Thailand, the Pope sent a message to a group of young people gathered for a prayer vigil on Wednesday night.

Speaking in Spanish, the Pope said he knows of the prayer vigil and he knows that many other young people are on their way to Bangkok to participate in a Mass on Friday.

Walking and praying, he said, are both beautiful things to do!

And he urged them to always open their hearts to God who gives us the strength to carry on walking because, he said, “we must never stand still in life”.

“A young person cannot retire at the age of 20, he must walk! Always going further, always uphill, “he said.

In his improvised message, the Pope also encouraged those who may fall to have the strength to get up and carry on going forward.

He said all young people owe it to themselves to reach for happiness, which he said, is not to be found on the couch or in “swamps of difficulties”.

It is to be found treading a path that is paved with courage and commitment, he said.

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