



(ZENIT, Vatican City, May 31, 2016).- Mary's example of reaching out and serving with joy is one that all Christians must follow if we are to be authentic, Pope Francis said today during morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta.

According to Vatican Radio, the Pope drew from the readings for today's Feast of the Visitation to encourage Mary's attitude of service, which resulted in her reaching out to Elizabeth. He lauded the generations of women in the Church who have followed Mary's example.

"Christians with a grimace or disgruntled expression on their faces, sad Christians, are a very ugly thing. It's really ugly, ugly, ugly. However, they are not fully Christian. They think they are (Christians) but they are not fully so. This is the Christian message," he said. "And in this atmosphere of joy that today's liturgy gives us like a gift, I would like to underline just two things: first, an attitude; second, a fact. The attitude is one of service or helping others."

The Pope pointed out how the Gospel describes Mary as setting off immediately and without hesitation to visit her cousin, despite being pregnant and despite the dangers. This young girl of 16 or 17, he said, showed her courage in getting up straightaway and setting out on her journey.

"The courage of women. The courageous women who are present in the Church: they are like Mary. These women who bring up their families, these women who are responsible for rearing their children, who have to face so many hardships, so much pain, women who look after the sick.... Courageous: they get up and help other people. Serving others is a Christian sign. Whoever doesn't live to serve other people, doesn't serve to live. Serving others and being full of joy is the attitude that I would like to underline today. There is joy and also service towards others."

The Holy Father pointed out that Mary was able to serve Elizabeth because

she reached out to her.

Pope Francis said if we could learn these two things: to serve others and reach out to them, how much our world would change:

“Reaching out to others is another Christian sign. Persons who describes themselves as Christian and who are unable to reach out to others, to go and meet them are not totally Christian. Being of service and reaching out to others both require going out from themselves: going out to serve and meet others, to embrace another person. Through Mary’s service towards others, through that encounter, our Lord’s promise is renewed and makes it happen now, just as it did then. And it is really our Lord – as we heard during the first Reading: ‘The Lord, your God, is in your midst’ – the Lord is about helping other people, the Lord is about meeting other people.”