

# *Pope Puts Society at the Heart of First Sermon on Americas Tour*

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Quito, July 07 (teleSUR-RHC) Pope Francis stressed the importance of the family, and especially the need to understand society as a “shared family”, during a mass in Ecuador on Monday in the first service of his tour of South America.

“In each of our families and in the shared family that we all make up, no one should be discarded, everyone is worth,” the first Latin American pope told worshippers. Mary teaches us, Francis said, “to put ourselves in the shoes of others ... She teaches us that there is a 'we'.” “Mary is mother,” Pope Francis stirred on the crowd of hundreds of thousands of devotees gathering in the Ecuadorean city of Guayaquil the desire to repeatedly chant.

Francis told a brief anecdote on equality and how he learned the importance of family from his own mother: “Everyone is worth the same,’ my mother told me when I asked her ‘which of your five children do you love the most?’ She said that like her five fingers, each of her children was as important as the other.” Pope Francis made a trip to the city conducting a brief mass at the Sanctuary of the Lord of Divine Mercy (Santuario del Señor de la Divina Misericordia). He told thousands congregated “I will carry you all in my heart,” before joking that he won’t charge for his blessings. He then moved on to Los Semanes park, where he conducted an outdoor mass to an emotional and excited crowd just after 12 p.m. local time.

Buses loaded with people had been arriving in Guayaquil since late Saturday, including people from neighboring nations Colombia and Peru. Flags from nations including Argentina and Puerto Rico were spotted among the crowd, *El Comercio* reported.

Francis, the first pope from the southern hemisphere, will move on to Bolivia and Paraguay later in the week.

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