



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE OFFICE RESPONSIBLE
FOR PUBLIC SECURITY AT THE VATICAN**

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 12 January 2023*

[Multimedia]

*Mr. Chief of Police,
Mr. Prefect and Mr. Director,
Dear officers and agents!*

I welcome you to this traditional meeting, for the exchange of greetings at the beginning of the new year. I warmly thank the Chief of Police for his kind words and I greet you all, members of the Vatican Inspectorate of Public Security. My thoughts also go to your families, colleagues who are not present, and, with gratitude, the chaplains, who accompany you spiritually in your daily journey.

This meeting offers me the opportunity to reiterate to each one of you my heartfelt gratitude for the service you carry out with self-denial and spirit of sacrifice. And I think of those hot, hot, hot days, and those cold, cold, cold ones... you know this well, don't you? Your presence in St Peter's Square and in the area adjacent to the Vatican is more important than ever for the protection of public order. I admire your work during the gatherings of the faithful and pilgrims, who come from all over the world to meet the Pope and to visit the tomb of the Apostle Peter and pray at those of his successors, most of whom are in the Vatican Basilica.

And I cannot forget your generous dedication on the occasion of my movements in the city of Rome and in the pastoral visits in Italy. For all this, I heartily reiterate my esteem and appreciation for your helpfulness and for your attentive and qualified service. I will tell you something: I am

ashamed to disturb you so much, I would like to go alone... I am ashamed, but thank you, it has to be done. This service, while honouring your duties as officials of the Italian State, also manifests the good relations that exist between Italy and the Holy See.

Dear friends, I encourage you to persevere in the ideals and intentions that inspire your life and your behaviour in the exercise of the delicate tasks entrusted to you. I hope that your work, carried out not infrequently with sacrifice and risk, may always be inspired by the desire to help your neighbour and the community. May the birth of Jesus Christ, which we have just celebrated, always keep alive in you the Christian sense of fraternity and solidarity. I invite you to rediscover the ever-new beauty and strength of the Gospel, and to make it incisive in your consciences and in your lives, courageously bearing witness to God's love in every environment, including that of work. The strength of the Gospel. To understand the Gospel, one must read it. If I may, I will give you a piece of advice: get a little copy of the Gospel, small, pocket-sized. Carry it in your pocket, in your bag, and when you are here or there, and have a bit of time, read a little passage. Every day, that contact with the Gospel. If you have it with you, it is easier. And this sows good things in the soul, and slowly fills the soul with the words of Jesus. This is my advice, you will see.

In the Message on the occasion of the recent World Day of Peace I emphasized that, even when the events of our existence and of history are unfortunately fraught with difficulties and at times dramatic, “we are called to keep our hearts open to hope and to trust in God, who makes himself present, accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness and, above all, guides our path” (no. 1). Your service too can be a sign of God’s proximity to the brothers and sisters whom you meet every day and who await a gesture of courtesy and welcome from you. This is a tangible way of being peace makers, “artisans” of peace. Receiving people, listening to people, helping people, with kindness. And how much need there is today for people who work for peace not with fine words, but with deeds, carefully carrying out their duty in the service of the common good!

With these wishes, I wish to extend my New Year greetings to each of you and to your families. I entrust you all to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel, that they may intercede before the Lord and obtain for you prosperity and concord, and protect you from all dangers. May my Blessing, which I impart from my heart to each one of you and your families, accompany you always. And please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!

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