



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE STS PETER AND PAUL ASSOCIATION

*Hall of Blessings
Sunday, 23 June 2013*

Good morning!

I would like to say thank you, thank you very much! Right from the start you have accompanied me with your prayers, your affection and your precious service in the various celebrations. I warmly thank you for this.

I know that there is a lot of organization “behind the scenes”. I also know that in addition to your service of welcoming people to the liturgical celebrations in St Peter’s Basilica, your apostolate also extends to cultural and charitable work. Charity above all, caring in a practical way for others, for the poorest, for the weak and for the needy, is a badge of Christians. Furthermore, you have a full formation programme for candidates and young students who wish to take part in the life of the Association. To bring and to live out his mercy to all, seeing his Face in the faces of those we meet, growth in the knowledge and love of God is essential. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to you for all this.

I congratulate the 22 new Members who made their promises this morning: let Christ’s love always be your certainty so that you witness to him with generosity and conviction!

It is beautiful to belong to an association like yours, composed of people of different ages, united in the common desire to bear a special witness to Christian life, serving the Church and our brethren and asking nothing in return. This is beautiful: serving without asking for anything in return, just as Jesus did. Jesus served everyone and asked for nothing in return! Jesus did things free of charge and you do things free of charge. Your reward is exactly this: the joy of serving the Lord and of serving him together! Get to know him better and better, through prayer, retreat days,

meditation on the word and study of *The Catechism*, so as to love him more and more and to serve him with a generous and great heart, with magnanimity. This is a marvellous Christian virtue: magnanimity, being great-hearted, ceaselessly dilating the heart, patiently, loving everyone; and none of that pettiness that does us so much harm, but with magnanimity. Your testimony will be more convincing and effective and your service, too, better and more joyful.

I entrust you all to the motherly protection of Our Lady, and to the intercession of Sts Peter and Paul. I likewise pray for your relatives, especially those who are sick, and for your children who are growing up. I have seen so many children here: it is so beautiful, it is really beautiful! Continue to pray for me. My blessing to you all, with affection. Thank you! I will now impart my blessing to you. Think of all the people you love so much: your family, your friends, so that my Blessing may come down upon them. But think as well of those you do not love so much, of those who hurt you, of those whom you find a little annoying. Think of them too so that this blessing may also be for them.