



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF ST PETER'S CIRCLE

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 31 October 2013*

Dear Members of St Peter's Circle, Good morning!

I wish to express my appreciation for your work in support of the Church's charitable activities to help those who are most in need. I greet you all with affection and I thank your President General, Duke Leopoldo Torlonia, for his kind words.

The Year of Faith is drawing to a close. During this providential time of grace, the Church has renewed her faith in Jesus Christ and has rekindled her joy in walking in his ways. And a faith which is lived out in a serious manner gives rise to acts of authentic charity. We have so many simple testimonies of people who become apostles of charity in their family, at school, in the parish, in the workplace and in social circles, in the streets, everywhere.... They have taken the Gospel seriously! The true disciple of the Lord commits himself personally to a charitable ministry whose scope is man's multiform and endless poverty.

You too, dear friends, feel that you are sent to the poorest, frailest and most marginalized sisters and brothers. You do so as baptised Christians and regard it as one of your duties as lay faithful. And not as a special ministry to be carried out on occasion, but rather as a fundamental responsibility with which the Church identifies and which she carries out each day.

Every day situations arise, which summon us to service. Every day each one of us is called to be a comforter, to become a humble yet generous instrument of the providence of God and of his merciful goodness, of his love which understands and shows compassion, of his consolation which gives relief and courage. Every day we are all called to become a "caress of God" for those who perhaps have forgotten their first caresses, or perhaps who never have felt a caress in their life.

Here you represent a caress of God for the Holy See and for Rome! Thank you, thank you very much!

Dear brothers and sisters, continue to be a visible sign of Christ's charity to those who are in need either materially or spiritually as well as to pilgrims who come to Rome from every part of the world.

Today I wish to thank you in a particular way for Peter's Pence which you have collected in the churches of Rome. It is your customary participation in my care for this city's most needy. I encourage you to carry on your work, drawing love for your brothers and sisters from the school of divine charity, through prayer and listening to the Word of God.

I entrust you, your families and your work to the protection of the Holy Virgin, the *Salus Populi Romani*, that she may guide you and support you, as well as to the intercession of Saints Peter and Paul. Thank you for being "God's caress"!