



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY IN RIO DE JANEIRO**

*Clementine Hall
Monday, 7 April 2014*

Dear Friends,

Today, nine months after my unforgettable visit to Brazil, where I was welcomed with open arms by the Cariocan people, I feel a special joy in receiving this group — led by Cardinal Orani Tempesta — which represents all those who in some way helped organize the [28th World Youth Day](#), so that God's love literally touched the hearts of millions of people.

Speaking of the heart, I must tell you, when I arrived in Brazil, during my first official address I said that I wanted to pass through the great heart of Brazilians by asking permission to knock lightly at their door and to spend a week with the people of Brazil. However, at the end of the week, returning to Rome full of nostalgia, I realized that the Cariocan people are “thieves”! Yes, “thieves” because they stole my heart. I take this opportunity with you here today to thank them for that “theft”. Thank you for your contagious enthusiasm there in Rio de Janeiro, and because today you are helping me “assuage” that nostalgia for Brazil.

As I said before, all of you gathered today represent lay people, religious, priests and bishops who made their own generous contribution to the Day. I know that it was not easy to organize an event of that magnitude. I imagine that at times there was someone who thought it wouldn't go smoothly. Therefore, how lovely it is to be able to look back and see that the hours of work, the sacrifices even the temporary difficulties, were all insignificant compared to God's exalted action on our lowly human resources. It is the dynamic of the multiplication of the loaves. When Jesus asked the

disciples to feed the crowd, they knew it was impossible. But they were generous. They gave the Lord everything they had. And Jesus multiplied their efforts. Wasn't that what happened at World Youth Day?

We cannot, however, only look back. We must first look to the future, strengthened by the certainty that God will always multiply our efforts. Jesus repeats this to us constantly: "You give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37). Therefore, this miracle experience at World Youth Day must be repeated every day, in every parish, in every community, in the personal apostolate of everyone! We cannot rest knowing that there are still "so many of our brothers and sisters ... living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 49). Thus it is necessary to recall those three ideas that, in a certain sense, summarize the entire message of World Youth Day: to go, without fear, to serve. We must be a "Church which goes forth" (cf. *ibid.*, n. 20), as missionary disciples who are unafraid of difficulties, since we have already seen that the Lord multiplies our efforts, and therefore we are increasingly motivated to serve, giving ourselves unconditionally, full of the joy of the Gospel.

Dear friends, in fulfilling this commitment, let us look to the example of José de Anchieta, the Apostle of Brazil, who was recently declared a saint. In one of his letters, he wrote: "Nothing is difficult for those who are cradled in the heart and have, as their sole purpose, the glory of God and the salvation of souls, to which they would not hesitate to give their own life" (*Letter to Fr Tiago Laynez*). Thus, through his intercession I urge you to go forward with joy and courage in the beautiful mission of keeping alive the flame of love for Christ and his Church in the hearts of Brazilians. I thank you again for your presence and I ask you never to stop praying for me. Thanks!