



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN OF  
“SANTA MARTA” PEDIATRIC DISPENSARY**

*Paul VI Audience Hall  
Sunday, 17 December 2017*

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**[Multimedia]**

*Good morning!*

The joy of children.... The joy of children is a treasure. Joyful children. And we must do everything we can so that they continue to be joyful, because joy is like good soil. A joyful heart is like good soil that makes life grow properly, with good fruit. And that is why this celebration is being held: we always seek the coming of Christmas to gather, to have this party for them.

Listen closely. The first thing: safeguard the joy of children. Never dishearten children. Children suffer when they see there are problems at home, when their parents argue. Never dishearten children. They must always grow up with joy. Are you joyful? [“Yes!”]. I don’t believe you: yes or no? [“Yes!”] Excellent. This is joy.

The second thing, so that children may grow up well: make them speak with their grandparents. The two extremes of life. Because grandparents have memory, they have roots, and it will be grandparents who give roots to the children. Please, may children not be uprooted, without the memory of a people, without the memory of the faith, without the memory of the many beautiful things that have made up history, without the memory of values. And who will help the children to do this? Grandparents. Let them speak with their grandparents, to the elderly. Do you talk to your grandparents? [“Yes!”] Are you sure? [“Yes!”] To ask for candy? [“No!”]. No? Tell me ... sometimes, many times grandparents have passed away, isn’t that true? But there are other elderly people who can serve as grandparents. Always speak with the elderly. I’ll ask you a question; answer well: are grandparents, the elderly, dull? [“No! ... Yes!”] You.... [“They give us lots

*of presents!*"] He is interested: they give us lots of presents! They are not dull, they are kind. Tell me.... [*"They love us a lot!"*] They love us a lot. May the children learn to speak with the elderly, to speak with their grandparents.

And the third piece of advice I will give you: teach them to talk to God. Let them learn how to pray, to say what they feel in their heart.

Joy, speaking with grandparents, with the elderly, and talking to God. Okay? Does everyone agree? You too, agreed? I wish you a lovely day, with much celebration. And eat the four metres of pizza: eat it up, it will do you good, it will make you grow. And carry on!

Thank you! Thank you!

And now let us all pray to Our Lady, that she give us her blessing: *Hail Mary*....

[Blessing]

And pray for me!