



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Meeting of the Pope with a group of children in the “Bambino Gesù” Paediatric Hospital, Rome

Yesterday afternoon, in the study next to the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father Francis met with a group of children and young people, in-patients in the “Bambino Gesù” Paediatric Hospital in Rome, accompanied by their parents and by the doctors who are treating them. The patients – aged between 5 and 18 years – are the protagonists of a television series produced by the RAI, “I Ragazzi del Bambino Gesù”. The meeting was attended by, among others, the director of the Paediatric Hospital, Mariella Enoc, and the director general of the RAI, Antonio Campo Dall’Orto.

The following is a transcript of the Pope’s words during the meeting.

Words of the Holy Father

The Pope, after presentations and photographs with the children, reads the text of a note they have given him.

“Dear Francis, thank you for meeting with us. We are happy to be here, because you give us hope and courage for tomorrow. We love you – thank you! The children of Bambino Gesù”.

[Applause]

The Pope speaks again:

Thank you for these photographs, for this book, also for the dedication...

There are many stories. Each one of you is a story. Not only the sick children, but also the doctors, the nurses, those who visit, the families...

I will say two things that come to mind now.

One is something I noticed when you came... two months ago? ... 15 December last. I greeted you and there

was Dr. Enoc who accompanied me in the greetings, with some doctors, and she introduced the people to me. They all knew everyone's names: "This one is fighting this disease...". They also knew what was happening in their lives. And I perceived – I said it to you too, and then I will repeat what you said – I perceived that more than a hospital this is a family, that is one of the words you said. The most important thing was the name, the person, and only at the end was the disease mentioned, but almost incidentally, a secondary matter. It is a family, isn't it?

And then the other thing we saw, no? You were a bit ashamed of getting up and not looking good in front of the camera, and the director, who is a bit like a mother, came up to you and said, "Come", and she encouraged you. This is the beauty of a family, this is beautiful. ... Entering in a hospital always makes us afraid, and I see his when I come up to some children, not all but some, very little ones, and they see me in white, and they begin to cry; they think it is a doctor who has come to give them a vaccine, and they cry and are afraid. I stroke them a few times and they calm down. Because there is always the function of the hospital ... one must do this .. and there is the danger, the risk of forgetting the most important medicine that only a family can give: caresses! It is a form of medicine that is too costly, because to have it, to be able to do this, you must give everything, you must give all your heart, all your love. And you give them this affection, the caresses of the doctors, the nurses, the director, everyone.

Bambin Gesù has grown a lot lately, and has become a family. ... The child, the patient finds a family there. Family and community, two words that you have said and repeated, and I wish to thank you for this, because Bambin Gesù offers witness, human witness. Human. It is a Catholic hospital, and to be Catholic first you must be human, and you give human witness today. Please, continue always on this path, grow in this way.

Thank you, and before greeting you one by one, because in a family we must all be polite and greet one another, I will ask Dr. Enoc to say something about the projects, about Syria...

[Address by Dr. Enoc]

The Pope resumes:

You have seen that the Vatican heliport has been taken over by her (laughs), and when there are children who must arrive urgently at the hospital, they arrive by helicopter here and pass from the other side. She knows how to go ahead, and not only her, because this spirit is contagious, and she too has received this from you, and you pass this to each other. You are a family! Who is the most important person in a family? The mother, the father, the older brothers, the grandparents, the children ... each person is the most important and you are all important, but always together.

Now, before greeting you one by one, I will ask the Lord to bless you.

(Pope's blessing)

And please, pray for me! Do not forget. Thank you.
