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Audience with the “Mariele Ventre” Youth Choir of the Antoniano of Bologna

At 11.15 am this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the “Mariele Ventre” Youth Choir of the Antoniano of Bologna, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Zecchino d’Oro.

The following is the greeting that the Pope addressed to those present at the Audience:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear children and young people,

I greet you with affection, and those who follow you in the activities of the “Mariele Ventre” Youth Choir of the Antoniano of Bologna, which this year celebrates the sixty years of the contest entitled "Lo Zecchino d’Oro”.

I would like to express my appreciation for the fame your choir has gained over the years through its beautiful musical performances, which have given pleasure to children and also to adults. And this is because with your songs, with simplicity and skill, you convey a sense of serenity, greatly needed by everyone, especially those families that experience difficulties and sufferings.

Continue your journey: sing the authentic values of life and, through song, praise and thank God for all the good that He gives us. In this time of Advent, in preparation for Holy Christmas, your songs that narrate the event of the birth of Jesus can help those who listen to you to understand the love and the amazement of what happened in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. God became a child to be closer to man in every time, demonstrating His infinite tenderness.

I ask you to pray for me, and I cordially invoke upon you the Lord’s blessing, which I extend to your spiritual Assistant, to the Franciscan Fathers and to all your family members.

And now, from where we sit quietly, let us look at the Madonna who awaits the Child, who awaits Jesus. We too

all await Jesus, Who comes into our hearts. And let us all pray to Our Lady, the Hail Mary.

[Ave Maria]

Whenever we are in need, when we are sad or have some difficulty, sickness or problems, let us look at Our Lady, who teaches us to wait for Jesus. Jesus always comes. It takes a little patience, as she had –among great difficulties! – to receive Jesus.

Now I give my blessing to you all.

[Blessing]