

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 180312e0

Monday 12.03.2018

Audience with Members of Parliament and Politicians of the Province of Marseilles, France

At 11.40 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the parliamentarians and politicians of the province of Marseilles, France, accompanied by H.E. Msgr. Georges Pontier, archbishop of Marseilles, and by the bishops of the province.

The following is the Pope's address to those present at the Audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Ladies and gentlemen,

Accompanied by Msgr. Georges Pontier and the bishops of the province of Marseilles, you are making a journey to the heart of the Catholic Church, to discover the work that is being done here in Rome. As I thank you for accepting to take this path, I am happy to greet you cordially and to address you.

The proposal made by the bishops bears witness to the Catholic Church's esteem for political commitment when it is motivated by the desire to create favourable conditions for living together, respecting differences, attentive to situations of vulnerability, to the most fragile people. In your territories, as in many other places, you face issues which constitute challenges for you in the exercise of your mission. In effect, "true statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good" (Encyclical *Laudato si'*, 178). The history of your regions, strongly marked by the Mediterranean dimension, attests to the richness of the diversities that represent true potential on a human, economic, social, cultural and even religious level. It is all the more important, on the basis of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, in the great effort of political dialogue and of consensus building, to have at heart the search for the full development of all (see Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 240). From this perspective, the values of freedom, equality and fraternity are cornerstones and a horizon for the exercise of your responsibilities. Faced with the problems of society, it is also necessary to become the promoters of a genuine debate on values and guidelines that may be recognized as common to all. In this debate Christians are called upon to participate, along with believers of all religions and all

men of good will, in order to foster the development of a culture of encounter.

In this sense, may your desire to serve the common good lead you to do everything possible to build bridges between people who find themselves in different social, economic, cultural and religious conditions, as well as between different generations. I encourage you also to be creators of bonds between urban and rural spaces, between the world of studies and that of the professions, so that the dynamism of your territories is always enriched by these various specific areas. Finally, you are called always to try to be close to others, especially to those in a situation of vulnerability; never to resign yourself to social inequality, the root of the ills of society, but to promote an integral ecological conversion at the service of the preservation of our common home. I also think of migrants and refugees who have fled their countries as a result of war, poverty and violence, and of what has already been done to assist them. It is a question of persevering in the search for means compatible with the good of all, to welcome them, protect them, promote their integral human development and integrate them into society (cf. *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2018). In this way one may contribute to the construction of a more just, more human and more fraternal society.

I entrust your journey to Christ, the source of our hope and of our commitment to the service of the common good. I invoke the Lord's blessing upon you, your families, your country, and the bishops who accompany you. Thank you.
