



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO A DELEGATION OF THE "AMIS DE GABRIEL ROSSET"
AND OF THE "FOYER NOTRE-DAME DES SANS-ABRI"**

*Consistory Hall
Saturday, 13 December 2014*

[Multimedia]

Dear Cardinal, Dear Friends,

It is with great joy that I meet you and I would like you to know how much I appreciate your commitment with regard to the poorest, to the people rejected by society, who have no roof, nor anything to eat, who are without work and thus without dignity. I thank you for the presentation of this commitment that was made to me on behalf of your Delegation.

Your Founder, Gabriel Rosset, had heard the cry of the poor; he was shocked by the suffering of others, and responded with generosity. This cry is but the call of the suffering Christ himself: in the people you serve, you touch his wounds and heal them; and at the same time, they offer you a most profound lesson, for through them you encounter Jesus. The poor evangelize to us, they always evangelize to us, they communicate God's wisdom, mysteriously.

Today's world has urgent need of this testimony of divine mercy. At a moment in which today human persons are often rejected as useless, as they no longer render, on the contrary, God always recognizes in them the dignity and nobility of a beloved child; they have a privileged place in his heart. The poor are the Lord's favourite, they are at the centre of the Gospel.

I thank you for this testimony of mercy that you give with so many concrete actions, simple and warm gestures through which you assuage people's misery, giving them new hope and restoring their dignity. There is no way more beautiful to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to the world today. The option for the least, for those whom society rejects and puts aside, is a sign that we are always able to give, a sign that effectively bears witness to the Risen Christ. It is a sacramental sign.

Meanwhile, in this Season of Advent, let us turn our gaze toward the Virgin Mary, who has given to the world the Saviour and has taken the greatest care of Him, I would like to give you some advice: to remain steadfastly faithful to the name that your Founder wanted to give to his work: Notre Dame des Sans-Abri [Our Lady of the Homeless]. What a beautiful name! The Mother of Jesus who provides a home to her children! The Marian dimension of your commitment to others seems essential to me. The Heart of Mary is filled with compassion for all men and women, most of all for the poorest and most disadvantaged, those who are most needy; and it is her maternal tenderness — along with that of the Church — which manifests itself through you.

I ask Our Lady of the Homeless to protect you on your journey, to render your efforts fruitful and to give faith and hope to all those whom you meet. May Almighty God bless you.