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The Pope receives the new Swiss Guards: be strong in faith and generous with people you meet

Vatican City, 7 May 2016 – Growing in faith, experiencing the universality of the Church and living in fraternity were the three recommendations the Holy Father gave to the new Swiss Guards whose swearing-in ceremony took place yesterday, and whom he received in audience today with their families. "It is good to see that young people like you dedicate several years of your lives to the Church, and in particular to Peter's Successor", he said.

To grow in faith, the Swiss Guards are called upon to live their work "as a mission that the Lord Himself entrusts to you", he affirmed; "to make the most of the time you spend here in Rome, in the heart of Christianity, as an opportunity to deepen your friendship with Jesus and to journey towards the aim of every true Christian life: holiness". The Pope then invited the new members of the Corps to nurture their spirit through prayer and by listening to the Word of God, to participate devotedly in Holy Mass and to cultivate filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, to carry out their special mission, working every day "acriter et fideliter", bravely and faithfully.

"The tombs of the Apostles and the see of the bishop of Rome are a crossroads for the journeys of pilgrims from all over the world. You therefore have the opportunity to touch with your hands the maternity of the Church who welcomes, in her own unity, the diversity of many peoples. You are able to encounter people of different languages, traditions and cultures, but who feel that they are brothers by virtue of their common faith in Jesus Christ."

It is also important to experience fraternity, helping each other in daily tasks and mutually enriching one another, always remembering that "it is better to give than to receive". "By assuming this attitude, it will be easier to face with diligence and perseverance the tasks, large and small, of your daily service, giving witness to kindness and a spirit of welcome, selflessness and humanity towards all others."

"Dear Guards, I hope that you may live your days intensely, steadfast in faith and generous in charity towards the people you meet", Pope Francis concluded.