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## The Pope receives the Habsburgs on their family pilgrimage to Rome

This morning in the Clementine Hall Pope Francis received three hundred members of the Habsburg family, in Rome on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy.

“I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the Jubilee pilgrimage you have made as a family. I wish to underline this aspect, because the family in its broadest sense, with the wealth of its bonds and its variety, is a value to rediscover in our times”.

“In this happy circumstance, you also remember in a special way Blessed Charles of Austria, who precisely one hundred years ago acceded to the throne. His spiritual presence in your midst ensures that the Habsburg family today does not turn to the past in a nostalgic manner but, on the contrary, is actively present in the current moment, with its challenges and its needs. Indeed, some of you hold prominent roles in organisations of solidarity and human and cultural development; as well as in support of the project of Europe as a common home founded on human and Christian values”.

Francis expressed his joy that there are vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life in the new generations of the Habsburg family. “I thank the Lord for this, with you, and find further confirmation in this fact that the Christian family is the first terrain in which the seeds of vocations – starting precisely from that of marriage, which is a true vocation – may germinate and develop”.

“Charles of Austria was first and foremost a good family father, and as such, a servant of life and peace”, he continued. “He had known war, having served as a simple soldier at the beginning of the First World War. Assuming his reign in 1916, and sensitive to the voice of Pope Benedict XV, he did his utmost to promote peace, at the cost of being misunderstood and ridiculed. In this too he offers us an example, more relevant than ever, and we can invoke him as an intercessor to obtain from God peace for humanity”.

“I offer you my heartfelt thanks for your visit, and assure you that I will accompany with my prayer the journey of your family. And you too, please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you”, concluded the Pope.

