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# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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## **Audience with the Pontifical Swiss Guard on the occasion of the swearing in of new recruits**

At 11.15 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps, on the occasion of the swearing in of the new Guards, accompanied by their relatives.

The following is the full text of the Pope's address to those present:

### **Holy Father's Address**

Mr. Commandant,  
Reverend Chaplain,  
Dear Guards,  
Dear relatives and friends of the Pontifical Swiss Guard!

I am happy to meet you on the occasion of this, your day of celebration, and I wish to address a warm greeting especially to the new recruits, who have chosen to spend some years of their youth in the service of the Successor of Peter. The presence of your parents, relatives and friends, who have come to Rome to take part in these days of celebration, expresses both the affection of Swiss Catholics for the Holy See, and the Christian education and good example through which parents have transmitted to their sons the faith, the value of belonging to the Christian community and the meaning of ecclesial service.

As you do every year, you have commemorated the painful, and at the same time famous "Sack of Rome", in which the Swiss Guards distinguished themselves in courageous and indomitable defence of the Pope, to the point of sacrificing their lives. Today you are not called to this heroic offer of physical life, but to another no less arduous sacrifice: to serve the power of faith. This is a valid barrier for resisting the various forces and powers of this earth and, above all, he who is "the prince of this world", the "father of lies" who "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour", according to the words of the apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:8). You are called to be strong and brave, supported by faith in Christ and by His word of salvation. Your presence in the Church, your important service in the Vatican is an opportunity to grow as brave "soldiers of Christ". The pilgrims and tourists who have the chance to meet you are edified by discovering in you, together with the characteristics of

composure, precision and professional seriousness, also generous Christian witness and holiness of life. Let this be your first concern.

I would like to invite you to live the time you spend in the “Eternal City” with sincere fraternity, supporting one another in leading an exemplary Christian life motivated and supported by your faith. I am sure the strongest impetus to come to Rome to perform this service was given to you by your faith. The singular mission entrusted to you for the Holy See and the Church indeed has its source in Baptism, which enables you to witness faith in Christ, dead and resurrected, wherever Providence takes you.

Dear Guards, feel that you are an active part of the great people of God, missionary disciples committed to witnessing the Gospel in the environment in which you work and in the places you spend your free time. This takes the form of small daily gestures, sometimes repetitive, but to which it is important to give an always new meaning. In this way, a style of behaviour is formed that, within the Corps, consists of mutual harmony and respectful communion with your superiors, and externally expresses itself in hospitality, kindness, and patience.

I hope you will also be able to make the most of this season of your life to seize some of the many opportunities for spiritual and cultural growth that Rome offers you. St. Philip Neri, whose liturgical memory we celebrate towards the end of this month, accompanied his boys in the discovery of the traces of ancient Christian communities, following the footsteps of the saints. This is a very interesting thing to do: to explore Rome following the footsteps of the saints who lived in this city, and it will make your period in Rome even more unforgettable and fruitful!

I would like to take this opportunity to renew to the entire Swiss Guard Corps my acknowledgement of the care and diligence with which it carries out its precious activity in the service of the Pope and Vatican City State. I ask you to pray for me and, as I invoke upon you the protection of the Holy Virgin and of your patrons St. Martin, St. Sebastian and St. Nicholas of Flüe – the sixth centenary of whose birth we remember this year – I impart to you my heartfelt apostolic blessing.

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