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OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 170626c

Monday 26.06.2017

Audience with Members of the Italian League for the Fight against Tumours (LILT)

At midday today, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the Italian League for the Fight against Tumours (LILT).

The following is the Pope's address to those present.

Holy Father's Address

Dear friends,

I welcome you and thank the president for the kind words he has addressed to me on behalf of you all.

The commitment of your Institution constitutes a dual richness for society. On the one hand, your many services contribute to shaping in people and in families a style of prevention: or rather, it promotes a mentality that oncological prevention is above all a lifestyle. At the same time, along with the very many and diverse situations in Italy, you nurture voluntary work, an emblematic expression of that gratuity that should increasingly have an impact on our daily life.

Your work represents a very useful tool for raising awareness and for formation. There is a great need to spread a culture of life, made up of attitudes and behaviours. A true popular culture, serious, accessible to all, and not based on commercial interests. More specifically, families need to be accompanied on a path of prevention: a path that involves the different generations in a fraternal "pact", a path that values the experience of those who have lived, along with their relatives, the arduous path of oncological pathology.

Equally valuable is the collaboration of the volunteers of the Italian League for the Fight against Tumours with the healthcare structures, both public and private, as well as the help offered to families in ensuring assistance, especially in the often tiring and relentless continuity of everyday life.

This latter aspect constitutes a witness with which the ecclesial community is particularly in harmony and sharing, as it is called by vocation and mission to live in service to those who suffer and to live this in accordance to the typically Christian duality of humility and silence. Indeed, good is accomplished and is effective especially when it is done without seeking recompense and visibility, in the concrete situations of daily life.

In this service of yours there is also a continuous decentralization towards the peripheries. Indeed, “periphery” refers to every man and woman who lives in a condition of marginalization; the periphery is every person confined to the margins of society and relationships, especially when disease infringes upon the usual rhythms of life, as is the case with oncological pathologies. It is the periphery that calls to the responsibility of each one of us, since every Christian, along with every many inspired by the desire for truth and goodness, constitutes a conscious instrument of grace.

Caring for others, as witnessed in everyday life with many people who are sick, is an inestimable wealth for society: it reminds the entire civil and ecclesial community not to be afraid of closeness, not to be afraid of tenderness, not to be afraid of “spending time” with bonds that offer and welcome mutual support and comfort, spaces for authentic rather than formal solidarity.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that since health is a primary and fundamental common good for every person, it is to be hoped that oncological prevention be extended to all, thanks to collaboration between public and private services, civil and charitable initiatives. In this way, with your specific contribution, in this sector too we can try to ensure that our societies become ever more inclusive.

Thank you for this meeting. I entrust your effort and that of the volunteers, along with all the sick people you encounter, to the maternal protection of Mary Most Holy, *Salus infirmorum*, and I bless you from my heart. Thank you.
