

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
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Audience with Collaborators and Friends of Telepace

At 12.30 today, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the collaborators and friends of Telepace on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the broadcasting network.

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

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

I greet you with affection and thank Don Guido Todeschini for his words of introduction. *Telepace* has just concluded the initiatives organized on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary. It was a year of special gratitude to God and reflection on your professional service. Indeed, even the tools of communication are a gift from God: they have "opened up broader horizons for many people. This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility. I like to refer to this power of communication as "closeness". ... a closeness which cares, comforts, heals, accompanies and celebrates" (*Message for the 50th World Communications Day, 24 January 2016*).

Telepace has always distinguished itself for its vocation to "closeness" and for its authentic service "to God and to man in the Church", as your motto reads. It is in this context that one should interpret your decision, from the beginning, not to accept any kind of advertising and to survive only by donations. Like the first Christians, there is a total entrustment to Providence, which rests on Jesus' invitation: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (*Mt 6: 33*).

Telepace was born small and limited to a few Italian provinces, with a precise objective: *to be the voice of those who have no voice*. I encourage you to continue to pursue this. Especially at the current time, in which the throwaway culture leaves more and more people without a voice. In 1990, at the behest of Saint John Paul II, the Rome office was opened: the Wednesday audience, the *Angelus*, the Rosary and the Pope's celebrations

arrive fully and directly in every home. A great relationship of relationship and affection with the See of Peter, which is also linked to the “*Cenacolo Maria Stella dell'Evangelizzazione*”.

I am therefore happy to share this moment of celebration for your anniversary. It is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to renew the commitment taken forty years ago. For this, I would like to briefly entrust to you three commitments.

The first: *to be antennas of spirituality*. The image of the antenna is always beautiful and eloquent in its dual function of emitting and receiving a signal. *Telepace*, as a radio and television channel, is an expert in this communication process. It is up to you to know how to recognize the spiritual signs of the Father's merciful love in everything that happens. “Today too, the Spirit continues to sow in us a desire for the Kingdom, thanks to all those who, drawing inspiration from the Good News amid the dramatic events of our time, shine like beacons into the darkness of this world” (*Message for the 51st World Communications Day, 24 January 2017*). In your profession you can be living channels of spirituality to God and to all your listeners and viewers. Above all the poor, the last, the excluded. Never forget them, the poor next door! Continue to stand alongside prisoners, those who are condemned to death – this is bad, but still there is the death penalty – as when you went to the death row in Texas, where you accompanied and attended two young people to the end, after having comforted them with the Sacraments. It is the spirituality of charity!

Second commitment: *to educate young people in the school of the Gospel*. One of the issues that emerged in the recent Synodal Assembly, dedicated to young people, concerns precisely their relationship with the Church. In the Final Document we read: “All young people, none excluded, are in the heart of God and therefore also in the heart of the Church. However, we recognize frankly that this affirmation that resonates on our lips is not always truly expressed in our pastoral action [...]. Yet the Gospel asks us to bold, and we want to do so without presumption and without proselytizing, bearing witness to the love of the Lord and extending His hand to all the young people of the world” (No. 117). How I would like the media to pay more attention to young people, not only by telling of their failures but also their dreams and their hopes! The Gospel of joy calls us to an educational commitment that can no longer be postponed. *Educating young people in the school of the Gospel* means, above all, *being witnesses* of the only Word that saves. May your communication be *outbound*, to engage in dialogue and, first and foremost, to listen to young people. Let us remember: the Gospel asks to dare!

Third: *being storytellers who do give in to gossip*. Communication is not just the transmission of news: it is availability, mutual enrichment, relationship. Unfortunately, a form of communication that continues to be widespread has nothing to do with attention to one another and with mutual understanding: it is gossip. It is a bad habit that every day undermines the human community, sowing envy, jealousy and lust for power. You can even kill a person with this weapon, either by striking with it, or rather creating gossip, or by passing it on, when hearing it, prolonging life to lies and anonymous tip-offs. It is important, therefore, to communicate responsibly, also thinking about the harm you can do with language, with chatter, with gossip. I reiterate, then, my invitation to “promote a journalism of peace ... A journalism created by people for people, one that is at the service of all, especially those – and they are the majority in our world – who have no voice... A journalism committed to pointing out alternatives to the escalation of shouting matches and verbal violence” (*Message for the 52nd World Communications Day, 24 January 2018*).

May the Lord help you never betray the objective that you bear in the name *Tele-pace*. Always to be a television of peace, which is a gift of God and is a humble and constant conquest of humanity. Your logo is the dove holding an olive branch in its beak. I hope you will be, every day, doves of peace and fly in the ether on the two wings of prayer and charity.

Dear friends, in a few days we will live Christmas. Let us prepare for this great Mystery in silence: let it be the Child Who speaks, let His gaze, poor and defenceless, penetrate our hearts and with His tenderness make us “channels” of peace. I thank you for your visit, I bless you and your families, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!

