



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Greeting of the Holy Father to the children of the “Santa Marta” Paediatric Dispensary

This morning, in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the children assisted by the “Santa Marta” Paediatric Dispensary in the Vatican, with their families and volunteers.

The following is the impromptu greeting the Pope addressed to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Good morning, everybody!

These children, these kids do wonderful things! I am glad, I am glad to see you doing this! You sing well too, very well! You are good. And the cake looks good... Can we eat it? Can we eat it? All together... Or shall we wait? Let's wait, it is more prudent...

You too, thank you for bringing the children here. Giving joy to children is a very big thing. Even parents, when they know how to play with children, do a very great thing. Playing with children, children's expression of innocence, promise, many good things... Thank you for this meeting.

And now one thing. I read in these three boxes that the Magi brought, three words: Hope, Love and... What was it? [the children cry out: Peace!] Ah, didn't it say war?... [the children say: No!] Are you sure? [the children answer: Yes!] Which is more beautiful, war or peace? [the children shout: Peace!] Are you sure? Isn't war more beautiful? What does war do? You, loudly... [a child says: It destroys] It kills, it massacres ... War kills life, it kills the old, the young, the young, the children, it kills everything. But to defeat war, you need love. How can one live without war? With love. All together! How can one live without war? [all: With love] How? [all: With love]. Peace, love... what was the third one? [children say: Hope] Here, keep going with hope. Always looking to the future, looking to the horizon, with the hope that a better world will always come from the Lord, and also from our work. Let us say the three words: Hope, Love, war... ah, no! What was it? [the children say: Peace!] Ah, excuse me. Hope, Love and Peace. One more time, everyone! [the children shout: Hope, Love and Peace!]

You did well. Thank you! Congratulations! Thank you, parents, for being here, and all those who helped with this party. Now I must go to the Angelus and pray for you, and you pray for me. All right? Goodbye! Thank you.
