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Audience with members of the Arché Foundation

The following is the Holy Father Francis' greeting to the members of the Arché Foundation, received in audience today in the Apostolic Palace:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Thank you for coming to tell me your story, not only with words, but with your faces and your presence.

I thank Don Giuseppe Bettoni for his introduction, and above all for his work over these thirty years – but did you start working straight after First Communion? [Laughter] – ever since you began your work in welcoming mothers with children. You called it "Arché", which recalls the origin, the beginning, and we know that in the beginning there is Love, the love of God. Everything that is life, everything that is beautiful, good and true comes from there, from God Who is love, just as from the heart and womb of a mother comes human life, and just as from the heart and the womb of a Mother came Jesus, Who is Love made flesh, made human.

And so, by this logic, at the beginning there are faces: for you they are the faces of those mother and those children you have welcomed and helped to free from the bonds of violence and mistreatment, including migrant women whose flesh bears dramatic experiences.

Your welcoming communities are first and foremost a sign of hope for them, for these women and for their children. But they are also a sign of hope for you who share your life with them, and for the volunteers, the young men and women, the young couples who in this community experience service not only *for* the poor – a very good thing – but even better, *with* the poor.

The Mother and Child is such a familiar icon for us Christians. For you, it has not simply remained a beautiful

picture: you have translated it into concrete experience, made up of real stories and faces. This certainly means problems, difficulties, hardships… But at the same time, it means joy, the joy of seeing that sharing opens up paths of freedom, of rebirth, of dignity.

I thank you for this, dear brothers and sisters, and I bless you so that you may you so that you may contineu as long as the Lord wills. I am grateful to you in particular, also on behalf of the diocese of Rome, because I know that the day after tomorrow you will inaugurate your house here in Rome, a house that will house a new community. May it be a place where you live in God's style, which is closeness, tenderness and compassion. And may the structure always be at the service of people, not the other way around.

May the Holy Spirit always renew in you the joy of the Gospel, and may Our Lady protect you. Please pray for me too. Thank you!