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Message of the Holy Father Francis to the president of Spanish Caritas on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of its founding

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the president of Spanish Caritas on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of its founding:

Message

To Manuel Bretón Romero

President of *Cáritas Española*

Dear Brother:

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of *Cáritas Española*, I would like to send you and all the members of this Institution my warmest greetings. The motto you have chosen for this celebration sums up well the history we have lived: “75 years of love for others”. It is a service which continues in the present and which opens itself to the future with hope, able to see the face of Christ crucified in so many suffering people, and offering them friendship, help and comfort. This Jubilee is a propitious occasion to thank the Lord for all the love he has given us and also an opportune time to discern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the paths to take in this new stage.

I would like to point out three characteristics that cannot be missing from this itinerary. First, we must bear in mind that Caritas' path is the “*path of the least*”. The poor and the excluded are the privileged recipients of the Gospel; they occupy a preferential place in God's heart, to the point that he himself “became poor” (cf. *2 Cor* 8:9). But we cannot wait for them to come knocking at our door; we must go out to look for them, seek their benefit in its entirety and their full development, recognizing their dignity and their rights.

It is also a “*way of mercy*”, for this is the style of God, who seeks out and approaches the weakest to care for them with compassion and tenderness. To follow this path requires an attitude of continual conversion and configuration to Christ, for only to the extent that we make his sentiments and attitudes our own will our charity be more active and effective.

Finally, it is also a “*path of renewal*”, because the new realities of poverty require us to take care of people and our common home, and to be ready to walk the paths of the culture of encounter and charity, linking the local with the global, working from those close to us, but with a universal horizon (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, 142).

I encourage you to persevere with joy and determination in the activities and projects that you carry out in the Spanish dioceses, and which extend beyond territorial borders, for the good of so many brothers and sisters who need our closeness, love and solidarity.

May Jesus bless them and may the Holy Virgin watch over them and accompany them. And please do not forget to pray for me.

Fraternally yours,

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 15 June 2022

FRANCIS
