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Audience with members of the “Fundación Madre de la Esperanza de Talavera de la Reina”

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the members of the “Fundación Madre de la Esperanza de Talavera de la Reina” of Toledo, Spain.

The following is the address delivered by the Pope to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Excellency,

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am very happy that you are here today and that together you can share with me the feast of the resurrection of the Lord. A feast that continues and that we are still celebrating, on this vigil of Mercy Sunday. I know that you also have another reason to celebrate: fifty years of working and growing together, no less. And this is a beautiful thing.

The journey of life is like the Way of the Cross that you organise every year to accompany the Nazarene. On the one hand, you have to prepare many things, listen, learn, experiment; in short, help each other, often with the humility to acknowledge that we cannot do it alone. Then we have to ask the Lord for the courage to go out into the streets, carrying his image so that everyone can contemplate him. And so, you bring Jesus to others, even if you do not realize this, and you bring him with your gestures, your songs, your prayers, and it is beautiful that in our smallness, we can be witnesses of Jesus, missionaries of his mercy, missionaries of his love

In life, as in the Stations of the Cross, we all have a job, a task. Jesus looks at us and rejoices in our efforts and in the love that we are capable of transmitting. Some of you are artists, you make true works of art, which are then sold. To be able to earn a living is important, because the worker deserves his salary, but I believe that the

benefit of the work is greater for those who receive these small objects, perhaps as a gift, and see all the love that you have been able to put into making them. How important it would be if in the work of each person we were able to see all the joy of learning, the patience of their teachers to teach them, the teamwork that is capable of making the different capacities of each person converge in a final result that belongs to everyone. And all this love, in such a small thing... It seems incredible.

I have seen, in a photo, that you are carrying Jesus, captive, in your Way of the Cross. In this picture, Jesus has his hands tied and a cross embroidered on a small scapular. Jesus is dressed like this to make us realize that many brothers and sisters next to us do not feel able to do things like others can, and believe that their hands are tied. But this is not true, all together, with Jesus, we can do many good things. And in this way, you are the hands of Jesus, when you work together. You are also his feet, his voice, his Heart, when you go out to share with others the joy of having found him. And how? By thanking God for your parents, for your brothers and sisters, for your teachers, for your priests, for all the people who love you.

The colourful embroidered cross invites us to dream of the resurrection. Jesus came into the world to show us the way to heaven, to open its gates to us, and this is the great joy we celebrate in the resurrection: we are free to do good, to walk together towards that goal. And our cross - that is, the effort, the patience, the fatigue - results in a beautiful work of art, full of colour and hope, which, when it is sewn into our hearts, gives us strength and encourages us to go on.

May this be our purpose, at least for the next fifty years: to work together and to give joyful thanks that Jesus has chosen us for this great mission.

May Jesus bless you and may the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Hope, watch over you always. And please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

(After applause, the Holy Father imparts the blessing.)
