SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 240111c

Thursday 11.01.2024

Audience with members of the “Bearers of Saint Rose” Sodality of Viterbo

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the “Bearers of Saint Rose” Sodality from Viterbo.

The following is the text of the address prepared by the Pope for the occasion, handed to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you all, and I thank you for coming in such large numbers.

Yours is a relatively recently founded Sodality, but it draws on a very ancient heritage, dating back to the translation of the body of Saint Rose, which took place in Viterbo in 1258 on the orders of Pope Alexander IV, from the church of Santa Maria in Poggio to that of Santa Maria delle Rose, today the Sanctuary of Saint Rose. Since then, the celebration of the feast took on the solemn form that has continued to develop over time and has come down to us.

The roots of your history lead us to the days when the Saint lived in Viterbo, where she had a mystical experience that made her a promoter of Christian devotion and vitality for all the city. At a very young age, she chose absolute poverty and devotion to charity, and was a true leader, involving many others with her love for Jesus, to the point of becoming an uncomfortable presence for the authorities, who exiled her along with her family. An “agitated saint”, we might say, but moved by the Holy Spirit, so that her inner experience could not remain hidden, but rather was propagated like the light of a lamp that illuminates the entire house (cf. *Mt* 5:14-16). We need saints like this, even today: people who do not stay on the sofa in their slippers, but who, burning with an unbridled desire to live and proclaim the Gospel, with their passion become contagious in their holiness (cf. *Gaudete et exsultate*, 129; 138).

And you continue to transmit this memory with your service and your commitment to Christian life. During the celebration of the Feast, you transport a “machine” around thirty metres heigh, with an average weight of more than five thousand kilos, at the top of which there is the statue of the Saint. It is a spectacular sign, to the extent that since 2013 the machine of Saint Rose has been recognized by UNESCO as an “intangible heritage of humanity”. Remember, however, that what you do is much more important than this, because you, by showing everyone with the “Transportation” how great the example of Saint Rose is; through her, you make the Gospel of Jesus known. This is the most important thing: making the Gospel known through Saint Rose, and doing it together, united and in solidarity, living its values with “faith, strength and will”, “respect and humility”, because, in the procession and in life, no one can achieve such a great feat alone, just as your statutes say and as one of the mottos you chant together during the journey recalls: “*Semo tutti den sentimento*” [“*We are all of one sentiment*”].

Thank you for what you do, and for the many charitable, cultural and moral activities with which I know you make what you represent on the occasion of the Feast operative and tangible in the life of the people, especially those most in need. I encourage you to keep this tradition alive, and I bless you from my heart. And please, do not forget to pray for me.