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Audience with members of the Management Board and Scientific Committee of the Foundation for Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the Management Board and Scientific Committee of the Foundation for Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism.

The following is the text of the address prepared by the Pope for the occasion and distributed to the participants:

Address of the Holy Father

I am pleased to address you once again, after my message on the occasion of the establishment of the Foundation for Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism, to express my heartfelt appreciation for the work that has been carried out in recent months for the protection and enhancement of the memory of the audiovisual heritage.

The launch of wide-ranging initiatives such as the project dedicated to the census and description of audiovisual sources relating to the Jubilees of the twentieth century, and the projects aimed at rediscovering and disseminating the audiovisual heritage of institutions and subjects relevant to the history of the Church, such as those of the Bambino Gesù Paediatric Hospital and the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation, testify to the goodness of your objectives and the effectiveness of your method.

As I have already had the occasion to recall recently, the lack of a central institution specifically dedicated to preserving and handing down to future generations the audiovisual memory of the Pontificates and of the Church, has generated a situation without a point of reference capable of providing guidance with respect to the most suitable acquisitions of archival doctrine and of channelling cultural interventions towards a common purpose.

The Foundation for Audiovisual Memories of Catholicism is the response born in the wake of my indications and today traces a path that deserves to be developed further: the involvement of important universities, research

centres and technological partners in projects, such as the concrete development of coordination with institutes responsible for the preservation of the audiovisual heritage of the Church, outline a model to be followed, further enhanced and authoritatively validated by the collaboration that the Foundation has structured with the Vatican Apostolic Library and the Vatican Apostolic Archive.

The work of the AMC Foundation also recalls the need for a cultural shift in the general approach of ecclesiastical archives to the audiovisual sources, making them able also to encourage the same historiographic development of certain central aspects of the life of the Church from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries onwards. Indeed, it is known that, due to their specific characteristics, audiovisual documentation has management costs that many archival institutions struggle to cope with, both in terms of time and economic and human resources, so that the elaboration of a unified work direction and the prospect of shared solutions to common problems appears to be the only viable way forward today. The urgency to invest and plan specific actions in this field is therefore impelling, because the economic costs will certainly be lower than those that will be paid from a historical, cultural and religious point of view with the irreparable loss of so much Catholic audiovisual heritage.

For these reasons I strongly encourage the pursuit of the initiatives undertaken and, if you will allow me, I would like to ask you to begin sorting, according to scientific criteria updated in line with the most recent archival doctrine, the patrimony of the Vatican Film Library which, although modest in its quantitative extension, in this context assumes particular value today by virtue of the interest that the methods of acquiring the audiovisual documentation preserved there, according to the lines dictated by my Predecessors, hold from a historical-cultural point of view. In this regard, I particularly welcome the AMC Foundation's project to restore the films on the Jubilees deposited in the Vatican Film Library, which will involve important institutions, research centres and institutional sponsors. In view of the 2025 Holy Year, it seems to me a virtuous way to show everyone a possible and necessary path to value our rich but fragile ecclesiastical audiovisual heritage.

I wish you ever more fruitful work, and thank you for what you achieve. Continue this valuable cultural service with generosity and passion. I bless you from my heart.
