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Audience with managers and employees of TV2000 and Radio inBlu2000

This morning, in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the managers and employees of TV2000 and Radio inBlu2000 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of their founding.

The following is the Pope's address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of TV2000 and the inBlu2000 circuit. I greet Archbishop Giuseppe Baturi, secretary general of the Italian Episcopal Conference, and Archbishop Piero Coccia, president of the "Communication and Culture" Foundation and the "Rete Blu", and all of you who work in these media.

Ten years have passed since our previous meeting, and much has changed in the media panorama. Technological innovation has transformed the way content is produced, as well as its use; and now artificial intelligence "is radically affecting the world of information and communication, and through it, certain foundations of life in society" (*Message for the 58th World Day of Social Communications*).

In this maelstrom, which seems to pull in not only workers in the sector but all of us to some extent, there are however some principles which remain constant, like stars we can look at to guide us and not lose our bearings. And this relates in a particular way to you who, together with the daily newspaper "Avvenire" and the Sir Agency, have a very precise affiliation: the Italian Episcopal Conference. This is not a limit; on the contrary, it is an expression of a great freedom, because it reminds us that communication and information always have their roots in the human. And, moreover, it emphasizes the importance of embodying faith in culture, particularly through witness, telling stories in which the darkness around us does not extinguish the light of hope. It is crucial to remember and live this affiliation. That is why I would like to point you to three words to continue on the path

of your work.

The first is *proximity*, being close. Every day, through the television or radio, you make yourselves close to many people, who see you as friends from whom they receive information, with whom they can pass the time pleasantly, or set out in search of new realities, experiences and places. And this proximity extends also to the places and the peripheries where people live. I like to think that *proximity* is one of the qualities of God, who made Himself *close* to us. There are three things that God shows: proximity, to those who are close; tenderness – God is tender; and compassion. He always forgives. Do not forget this: proximity, compassion and tenderness. I encourage you to create networks, to weave bonds, to tell of the beautiful and good in our communities – with proximity – and to make protagonists of those who usually end up as extras or are not even taken into consideration. Communication – as we know – risks conforming to certain dominant types of logic, of bowing to power or even constructing fake news. Do not give in to the temptation of falling into line; go against the grain, always wearing out the soles of your shoes and meeting people. Only in this way can you be “authentic by vocation”, as an old slogan of yours used to say. And never forget those who are at the margins, poor people, lonely people, and worse still, rejected people.

The first word was *proximity*, the second I leave you is *heart*, in the fullness of its biblical meaning and of Christian tradition. In recent years you have rediscovered this often in the *Message for World Day of Social Communications*. It might seem out of place to juxtapose the heart with the technological world, as the world of communication is now, but it all stems from there. You cannot observe a fact, you cannot interview someone, you cannot tell something unless you start from the heart. In fact, communication is not resolved in the transmission of a theory or the execution of a technique, but it is an art that has at its centre the “openness of heart which makes possible ... closeness” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 171). This enables us to make space for others – shrinking that of the ego a little, to free ourselves from the shackles of prejudices, to tell the truth without separating it from charity. Never separate facts from the heart! And then, be courageous. It is not by chance that “courage” derives from *cor*, heart. Those who have a heart also have the courage to be alternative, without becoming polemical or aggressive; of being credible, without claiming to impose their own point of view; of being builders of bridges. And this is very important. We can think of a communicator as a bridge, because the communicator is necessarily a builder of bridges.

And the third word is *responsibility*. Everyone must do their part to ensure that every form of communication is objective, respectful of human dignity and attentive to the common good. In this way, we will be able to heal fractures, transform indifference into acceptance and relation. Yours is one of those professions that has the character of a vocation: you are called to be messengers who inform with respect, with skill, counteracting divisions and discord. And always remembering that at the centre of every service, at the centre of every article, at the centre of every programme, is the person: do not forget this. It is precisely that which gives meaning to communication.

Dear friends, ten years ago you undertook a phase of reassessing and reorganizing your work; in these days you have added a further piece with the launch of your app. May this contribute to communicating with proximity, heart and responsibility. Go ahead on this path, remembering what your Patron Saint Francis de Sales said: “It is not by the greatness of our actions, but by the love with which we do them” (Spiritual Retreats). It is not by the greatness of our actions that we please God, but by the love with which we do them. I bless you from my heart. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!
