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
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## Audience with participants in the Plenary of the Dicastery for Communication

This morning, Pope Francis received in audience the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Dicastery for Communication.

The following is the address delivered by the Holy Father to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters of the Dicastery for Communication, welcome, everyone!

I greet the prefect, Dr. Ruffiini, and the other directors; I greet the cardinals and bishops present here and all of you who make up this great working community.

In today's liturgy we read this exhortation from Saint Paul: "Stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace" (*Eph* 6:14-15). It could be the identikit of the good communicator, don't you think?

Indeed, yours is a vocation, it is a mission! With your work and your creativity, with the intelligent use of the media that technology makes available, but above all with your heart: one communicates with the heart. You are called to a great and exciting task: that of building bridges, when so many are raising walls, the walls of ideologies; that of fostering communion, when so many are fomenting division; that of letting yourselves get involved in the dramas of our times, when so many prefer indifference. This culture of indifference, this culture of "washing your hands", "it's not up to me, they will get by". This does a great deal of harm!

In these days of your Plenary, you asked yourselves how to foster a "constitutively synodal" communication. The Synod on synodality that we have just concluded now becomes an ordinary journey that must go forward – a journey that has been ongoing from the time that Saint Paul VI created the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops – that must become the style with which we live communion in the Church, a synodal style. In every expression of our community life, we are called to reverberate that divine love that in Christ attracted, and attracts us. And

this is the characteristic of ecclesial belonging: if we were to reason and act in accordance with political or corporate categories, we would not be Church. This would not do! If we were to apply worldly criteria or reduce our structures to bureaucracy, we would not be Church. Being Church means living in the awareness that the Lord is the first to love us, the first to call us, the first to forgive us (cf. *Rm* 5:8). And we are witnesses of this infinite mercy, which has been freely bestowed upon us, changing our life.

Now you might ask me: what does all this have to do with our work as communicators, as journalists? It has a lot to do with it! Indeed, precisely as communicators, you are called to weave ecclesial communion with your loins girded in truth, righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness to spread the Gospel of peace. Allow me to tell you my dream. I dream of a communication that succeeds in connecting people and cultures. I dream of a communication capable of telling and raising the profile of stories and testimonies from every corner of the world, circulating them and offering them to everyone. This is why I am happy to know that, despite the economic difficulties and the need to reduce expenses – I will talk about that later – you have made an effort to increase the number of languages with which the Vatican media communicate to over fifty, adding the Lingala, Mongolian and Kannada languages.

I dream of a communication from heart to heart, letting ourselves be touched by what is human, letting ourselves be wounded by the dramas that so many of our brothers and sisters experience. This is why I invite you to go out more, to dare more, to risk more, not to spread your ideas, but to recount reality with honesty and passion. I dream of a communication that is able to go beyond slogans, and to keep the spotlight on the poor, the last, migrants, and victims of war. A communication that fosters inclusion, dialogue, the quest for peace. How urgent it is to give space to workers for peace! Do not tire of recounting their testimonies, in every part of the world.

I dream of a communication that teaches us to give up a little of ourselves to make space for others; an impassioned, curious and competent communication, that knows how to immerse itself in reality in order to be able to tell it. It does us good to listen to stories with an evangelical flavour, which today, as two thousand years ago, tell us about God as Jesus, his Son, revealed him to the world.

Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid of getting involved, of changing, of learning new languages or travelling new roads, of inhabiting the digital environment. Always do so without letting yourselves be absorbed by the tools you use, without making encounters online a “surrogate” for true, real human relations, from person to person. The Gospel is the story of encounters, actions, looks, conversations on the street and at the table. I dream of a communication that is able to bear witness today to the beauty of the encounters with the Samaritan, with Nicodemus, with the adulteress, with blind Bartimaeus… as I wrote in the new Encyclical *Dilexit nos*, Jesus was “attentive… to individuals and above all to their problems and needs” (40). We communicators are called to do likewise, because by encountering love, the love of Jesus, “we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognizing the dignity of each human being, and of working together to care for our common home” (*DN,* 217).

Help me, please, to make the Heart of Jesus known to the world, through compassion for this wounded land. Help me, with communication, to ensure that the world “which presses forward despite wars, socio-economic disparities and uses of technology that threaten our humanity, may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: its heart” (*DN,* 31). Help me with a communication that is a tool for communion.

Although the world is shaken by terrible violence, we Christians know how to look at the many little flames of hope, the many stories, great and small, of goodness. We are sure that evil will not prevail, because it is God who guides history and saves our lives.

I would also like to mention Ms. Gloria Fontana [applause]. Today is her last day of work: I hope they will throw a party! After a good forty-eight years of service – she entered on the day of her First Communion, I think! She has provided a great hidden service, devoting herself to transcribing the Pope’s discourses.

And I would like to say something to you: we must still have a little more discipline regarding money. You must find a way to save more and find other funds, because the Holy See cannot continue to help you as it does now.

I know it is bad news, but it is also good news because it inspires creativity in all of you.

The Jubilee, which will begin in a few weeks' time, is a great occasion to bear witness of our faith and our hope to the world. I thank you in advance for everything you will do, for the Dicastery's commitment in helping both the pilgrims who will come to Rome and those who will not be able to travel, but who, thanks to the Vatican media, will be able to follow the Jubilee celebrations, feeling united with us. Thank you, thank you very much!

I heartily bless all of you and your work. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!