



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Audience with participants in the pilgrimage organized by the Augustinian Nuns of Saint Ildefonsus, from Talavera de la Reina, Spain

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the pilgrimage organized by the Augustinian Nuns of Saint Ildefonsus, from Talavera de la Reina, Spain.

The following is the greeting addressed to them during the audience:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for the welcome with the guitar. Singing and walking.

I am pleased to meet you. I also congratulate you for the commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the founding of the Convent of the Augustinians of Talavera de la Reina, which you celebrated last year, and of which this meeting is the epilogue.

Ever since its founding, this monastery has united contemplative life with the service of Christian education, and probably many of you entered into contact with these religious sisters during your school years. In this year dedicated to prayer, it seems to be a meaningful example of how our service and our apostolate – far from preventing the encounter with the Lord – must come from Him.

In this regard, I would like you to convey my blessing to the Augustinian Mothers, and the invitation not only to pray for me, as I always ask everyone, but also to be an example of inner life, to be teachers of the art of prayer, so that, from school, among all the knowledge that they can pass on to children, the ability to speak with God, the ability to listen to him, to feel Him present in every moment of life and to accept His inspirations with docility, may stand out.

And please, do not lose your joy, do not lose your sense of humour. Do not lose it. When a Christian, even more so a man or woman religious, loses their sense of humour, they “turn sour”. And it is so sad to see a priest, a religious, a nun, “turn sour”. They are preserved in vinegar. Always have a smile and good humour. I urge you to recite every day a beautiful prayer by Saint Thomas More to ask for a sense of humour. Do you know it? No. I will send for it and let you read it here, to ask for a sense of humour, which is what keeps us fresh, in God’s service. I repeat: a sad saint is a poor saint.

Holiness is always joyful, from Saint Philip Neri’s expressions of good humour to the expressions of a more cautious good humour, such as the smile. Have a smile that comes from the heart, that is not false, that is always full.

You come from Spain. In these days I am very close to Spain, because of the tragedy of Valencia. Yesterday, in the General Audience, we showed the *Virgen de los Desamparados*. They are suffering a great deal there. And now it seems that Barcelona too is having some problems, but given that now they know something of how to confront them, they are acting, they are limiting it there.

And this leads me to give you another piece of advice: always have the needs of others at heart. Do you know that there are people without work? And when someone starts to complain that they have too much work, think of those who have none. There are people who cannot pay the rent and who are exploited. When one enters a convent, a parish house, they think that everything they have is free of charge. When one is in one’s own parish house, one’s own convent, and on the days when it snows and rains, they are well protected, think that there are people who sleep outdoors, in all conditions.

But do not lose your good humour. I will read to you the prayer of Saint Thomas More, and I would like you to learn to recite it every day. This is what Thomas More says: “Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it. Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn’t frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.

Give me a soul that knows not boredom” – a bored Christian, a bored priest, a bored nun is sad – “that knows not boredom, grumblings, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called ‘I’. Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others. Amen”.

Thank you. Now I will give you my blessing.
