



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE  
**BOLLETTINO**

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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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### **Audience with a delegation of elected representatives of the French State**

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation of elected representatives of the French state, to whom he delivered the following address:

#### **Address of the Holy Father**

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome your delegation of elected representatives and of administrators of the French state, from the South of France. This pilgrimage to Rome is a courageous step, and bears witness to your desire to keep your life as believers united with that of men and women who occupy positions of responsibility. Thank you!

Rich in a centuries-long history, your region has been the theatre of events that have formed it, and it is up to you to make the most of them to transmit their legacy to future generations, as just as Frédéric Mistral, the poet of Provence, Alphonse Daudet and Marcel Pagnol all did in their works. Your region is also characterized by a rich Mediterranean dimension and is at a crossroads where a number of influences and traditions meet, but which also gives rise to confrontations that you are regularly called upon to resolve. This is its vocation, which I reiterated during my trip to Marseille: to be a place where different countries and realities meet on the basis of the humanity we all share, and not of ideologies that set people against each other, that divide the country (cf. *Palais du Pharo*, 23 September 2023).

The first reality I invite you to consider today is the urgency of offering young people an education that guides them towards the needs of others and rewards the sense of effort. Young people, as they grow, need an ideal, because they are fundamentally generous, they are fundamentally open to existential questions. It is a mistake to think that young people do not aspire to anything other than lounging on the sofa or on social networks! It is a mistake: this is not true. Involving young people, involving them in the real world, in a visit to the elderly or to

disabled people, a visit to the poor or migrants, this opens them to the joy of hospitality and giving, offering some comfort to people who are made invisible by a wall of indifference. It is curious how indifference kills human sensibility: how it kills! There already exist several noteworthy initiatives that demand only to be followed, encouraged and multiplied!

I also hope that, with your contribution too, the debate on the essential question of the end of life can be conducted in truth. It is a matter of accompanying life to its natural end through a more extensive development of palliative care. As you know, people at the end of life need to be supported by assistants who are faithful to their vocation, which is that of providing assistance and relief even while not being able to cure. Words are not always necessary, but taking a sick person by the hand, taking them by the hand, this does a great deal of good and not only to the sick person, but to us too.

In conclusion, I repeat to you that it is a great joy for me to see that you, who have responsibility in the economic and social field, are interested in the message of the Church and take the time to get to know it better through the meetings planned during your pilgrimage. Although distinct, politics and religion have common and shared interests, and in different ways we are all aware of the role we must play for the common good. The Church wants to reawaken the spiritual forces that make the whole of social life fruitful (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, 276), and you can count on her help.

Thank you for your visit, and I ask the Lord to inspire your projects and initiatives for the common good of your region, and to help you in implementing them. I bless you from my heart, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.

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