



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Audience with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Sisters of the Family of Nazareth on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation.

The following is the Pope's greeting to those present at the audience:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear Sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you at the very beginning of your Congregation's 150th anniversary celebrations. As you mark this important occasion, I trust that it will be an opportunity for you to offer gratitude to the Lord for the many graces received throughout your history, and also for each of you to be spiritually renewed in joyful service to the Lord.

How fitting it is that your anniversary has begun at the start of a new liturgical year, for the season of Advent, with its patient and hope-filled expectancy in the Lord's promises, can serve as a pattern for enabling us to develop a greater trust in God's providence. I pray, then, that your celebrations will help the members of your Congregation, and all who assist in its various apostolates, to grow in contemplative trust in the Incarnate Son of God, especially in the Blessed Sacrament and in the people you serve.

At the same time, your own jubilee happily coincides with the Holy Year upon which the entire Church is about to embark. Jubilees are precious times for taking stock of our lives, both as individuals and as communities. Moreover, they are opportunities for reflection, recollection, and listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today (cf. Rev 2:7). Through hearts open to the Lord and to a "genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation" (*Spes Non Confundit*, 1), may your communities always be "thresholds" in and through which those families that are the focus of your charism can find refuge, hope and peace in Christ our Saviour.

In this regard, we cannot fail to recall the many families in our own day who are ravaged by war and violence or displaced within or from their homelands. May your prayer and practical works of charity always reflect the love of Jesus, so that you may be signs of hope to those experiencing hardships of any kind.

Assuring you of my prayers that the Holy Family of Nazareth will continue to be your steadfast example in all your undertakings, I invoke upon all of you the Lord's blessings of joyful serenity. And I ask you, please, to pray for me; but for me, not against!
