



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Audience with a group of young people from the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially-Sighted

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially-Sighted, to whom he addressed the following greeting:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear friends, good morning and welcome!

I greet the president and all of you. Happy new year! May it be a year of personal growth and also of friendship between you.

For the Church, 2025 is a Jubilee year: according to tradition, every twenty-five years is a Jubilee year. And this Jubilee has a theme, a motto... Let us repeat it together: "Pilgrims of hope". I can't hear! ["*Pilgrims of hope*"]. Bravo!

The word "pilgrim" makes us think about walking, so I would like to wish for you always to be people *on the move*. At every age: children, young people, adults, seniors, always walking, never still, never already there, always with the desire to go ahead.

But the "pilgrim" is one who not only walks, but *has a destination*, and a particular destination: the pilgrim's destination is a holy place, which attracts him, which motivates the journey, which sustains him in his fatigue. In the case of the Jubilee, the destination is a door. Curious, isn't it? The Holy Door. Of course it is a symbol: the Holy Door represents Jesus Christ, His Mystery of salvation, which allows us to enter into the new life, free from the slavery of sin, free to love and serve God and neighbour.

And so I would like to wish for you not only to be on the move, but also *pilgrims*, that is, eager to meet Jesus, to know Him, to listen to His Word that gives meaning to life, that fills it with a new joy, a different joy, a joy that

does not remain “outside”, on the surface, but which fills the heart and warms it, a joy that is peace, that is goodness, that is tenderness. The joy of Jesus is like this. Only Jesus can give this joy. It is shown by the witness of many saints of all times, even of our time. Think of Pier Giorgio Frassati, a young man from Turin who lived a hundred years ago. And then there are the great “champions”, such as Francis and Claire of Assisi, whom you all know; or Thérèse of the Child Jesus, a young Frenchwoman of the late nineteenth century – she was so enamoured by Jesus that she would have liked to travel around the entire world to proclaim Him to everyone, and discovered that the way to do so was to become love herself, in a life consecrated to prayer and the service of her sisters.

Dear friends, these are “pilgrims of hope”: young people who encountered the Lord Jesus and walked with Him, and He is the hope for every man, woman, and also for the world. Let us follow this road, and we too will become little signs of hope for those we meet. This is my wish for me and for you.

Thank you for coming! I bless you all. Have a good journey! And do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!
