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OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 250118b

Saturday 18.01.2025

Audience with the Swiss Pontifical Guard Foundation

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Swiss Pontifical Guard Foundation, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding.

The following is the address delivered by the Pope to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Good morning,

Madam President and members of the Board of the Swiss Pontifical Guard Foundation,
Mr. Commander,

Your Excellencies,

Dear benefactors!

I give a warm welcome to you all. Twenty-five years ago, during the great Jubilee of 2000, the *Pontifical Swiss Guard Foundation* was established. Now another Jubilee Year has just begun, which coincides happily with the celebration of your 25th anniversary. It is good – it is very good – that you do this with a pilgrimage to Rome, where you can renew your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, at the tomb of the Apostles. I like to think that all this Vatican construction rests above the tombs of the martyrs. They were buried here, below here.

Indeed, your valuable effort must always be inspired by a spirit of faith and charity, because helping the Pontifical Swiss Guard means supporting the Successor of Peter in his ministry in the universal Church – and I too am personally very grateful for the faithful service of the guards. Over time, the work of the Swiss Guard has

changed considerably, but its aim remains always that of protecting the Pope. This also involves contributing to the welcome of the many pilgrims from all over the world who wish to meet him. And this takes patience, and the guards have it! And this is something very good about them: they repeat things, they explain... A great deal of patience. Well done!

Your Foundation supports the guards in various ways and areas: first of all, it acts in favour of the families, especially with regard to the education and formation of children in appropriate scholastic institutes. I like the fact that the guards get married; I like the fact they have children, they have a family. This is very important, very important. This aspect has become a lot more relevant, inasmuch as the number of married guards with children has increased, and the wellbeing of the families is of fundamental importance for the Church and society. In addition, the Foundation provides the means to guarantee, improve and update the professionalism and working methods, equipment and infrastructure. Finally, you offer valuable assistance to all those who, after their service in the Vatican, return home. I am in contact with some of those who remain very, very close to the Vatican, to the Church. At times they call by telephone, they send something; when they come to Rome, they visit me. It is a good contact that I have. And all this is necessary for the Guards to be able to provide their valuable service in the most effective way and for the good of all. The cooperation between your Foundation and the Pontifical Swiss Guard is exemplary, because it demonstrates that no reality can proceed alone. It is important to collaborate. We must all help each other and support each other, and this applies to you, to individual communities, but also to the Church as a whole.

Therefore, I would like to take the opportunity of this meeting with you to express my heartfelt gratitude for the generous support you have given to the Pontifical Swiss Guard during these twenty-five years. Thank you, thank you very much! And I hope that you will also continue your appreciated work in the future.

I ask you to pray for me and I too assure you of my remembrance in prayer and in mine for you and your intentions. Now I will gladly give my blessing.
