



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE  
**BOLLETTINO**

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### **Audience with presidents and directors of the “Automobile Club d’Italia” Federation**

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the presidents and directors of the *Automobile Club d’Italia* Federation, to whom he delivered the following address:

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

*Dear brothers and sisters, good morning.*

I am pleased to meet you at the beginning of this Jubilee year, which asks us to be “pilgrims of hope”. The most important thing about a pilgrimage is deciding the destination and taking all the necessary steps to reach it, without letting oneself be distracted along the way, without wasting precious energy on secondary objectives, without wandering to discover and see everything, which leads us to forget the goal. It is curious: at times we fall into a maze and forget where we are going... the aimless wandering of life.

Pilgrimage involves the risk of losing our way, it is true, of finding ourselves in difficulty or feeling lost. The Jubilee can therefore be for everyone an opportunity to start afresh, the right moment to recalculate the path of our lives, identifying the milestones not to be missed and those that could become an obstacle to us reaching our target. There is a truth. We are not meant to stay still, but always to be searching, on the move towards the destination. And those who stand still, their heart stays still too. It happens with water. Still water is the first to become stagnant. But the destination is not any goal; it is a goal of sharing, brotherhood and joy, as far as is possible in this world, with its highlights and its trials, open to a definitive happiness in the company of Jesus, Mary and all the saints. So, never be discouraged, but start out again, always. Starting out again is something of our mystique.

And in this regard, I would like to reflect briefly on two words, which become paths to follow to give hope to the present and to build a worthy future: *education* and *environment*. These two words are important.

Let us start with *education*. There is a need for a culture of respect for road safety, starting from the schools. The

educational programmes you promote, involving students, are a valid contribution to educate in active citizenship. Adopting responsible behaviour, respecting the rules, and being aware of risks helps civil co-existence and the achievement of the goal “zero victims on the roads”. This is a clear objective. And this is a programme, but first and foremost a duty. To travel goes hand in hand with learning, not with suffering, weeping, or even dying. Therefore, I encourage you to go forward in your commitment to raising awareness and educating: this too is a way to promote and defend life.

The second word, closely linked to “education”, is *environment*. The number of vehicles, non-renewable energy consumption and the cost of petrol, pollution and traffic are some of the factors that have an undeniable impact on the common home and on those who inhabit it. The quality of life is at stake! Therefore, it is urgent to work in order to confront these challenges in a serious and determined way, also through the creation of alliances to create incentives for sustainability. In this sector, technology already offers relevant opportunities and various tools; others will certainly be made available. It is necessary to take a broad view, seeking out – as you are already doing – collaboration and common action for the benefit of all, making mobility truly sustainable and accessible.

Dear friends, for one hundred and twenty years you have been at the service of citizens, keeping pace with the times. In this epoch change, continue to focus on people, their wellbeing and their safety. I entrust you, your families and your work to Saint Christopher, Patron of motorists. I bless you, and please, I ask you to pray for me. Thank you!

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