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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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UDIENZA AI MEMBRI DELLA "PAPAL FOUNDATION"

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Alle ore 12.15 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI riceve in Udienza i Membri della "Papal Foundation" e rivolge loro il saluto che riportiamo di seguito:

• SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Cardinal Keeler,
Brother Cardinals and Bishops,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to greet the members of the Papal Foundation once again, on your annual visit to Rome. In this Pauline Year I welcome you with the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 1:7*).

Saint Paul reminds us of how the entire human race yearns for God's grace of peace. Today's world is truly in need of his peace, especially as it faces the tragedies of war, division, poverty and despair. In just a few days I will have the privilege of visiting the Holy Land. I go as a pilgrim of peace. As you are well aware, for more than sixty years, this region — the land of our Lord's birth, death and Resurrection; a sacred place for the world's three great monotheistic religions — has been plagued by violence and injustice. This has led to a general atmosphere of mistrust, uncertainty and fear — often pitting neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother. As I prepare for this significant journey I ask in a special way that you join me in prayer for all the peoples of the Holy Land and the region. May they receive the gifts of reconciliation, hope and peace.

Our meeting this year occurs during a time when the entire world is struggling with a very worrying economic situation. At moments such as these it is tempting to overlook those without a voice and think only of our own difficulties. As Christians we are aware, however, that especially when times are difficult we must work even harder to ensure that the consoling message of our Lord is heard. Rather than turning in on ourselves, we must continue to be beacons of hope, strength and support for others, most especially those who have no one to watch over or assist them. For this reason I am pleased to have you here today. You are examples of good

Christian men and women who continue to meet the challenges we face with courage and trust. Indeed, the Papal Foundation itself, through the great generosity of many, enables valuable assistance to be carried out in the name of Christ and his Church. For your sacrifice and dedication I am most grateful to you: by means of your support the Easter message of joy, hope, reconciliation and peace is more widely proclaimed.

Entrusting all of you to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she who remains always in our midst as our Mother, the Mother of Hope, (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 50), I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and your families as a pledge of joy and peace in the Risen Savior.

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