



# SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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## Charitable initiatives are the ripe fruit of a Church that shows God's mercy

This afternoon the Pope visited the “Redemptor Hominis” Clinic of the Camillian Fathers, built thanks to the contributions of Italian Caritas and other international Catholic bodies. It offers care for 400,000 people, and provides a model for the national healthcare service. The centre also provides healthcare for the poor entirely free of charge, and includes numerous specialist services. Seventy healthcare workers collaborate in the centre.

He also met with the directors of Georgian Caritas, which besides its numerous aid activities, has also put into effect a programme of special assistance for refugees in the territories afflicted by conflicts, especially Syria and Iraq. The Catholic community of Assyrian-Chaldean rite participates widely in this activity.

The Catholic bodies also include the Pope John XXIII Community, which has opened a reception centre for young people suffering from alcoholism or other difficulties, while in the field of education the Salesian Sisters perform a key role. Finally, the Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Catholic University, founded in 2002 in Tbilisi as part of an initiative by Bishop Giuseppe Pasotto, apostolic administrator of the Caucasus.

Around seven hundred people, including patients, staff and representatives of charitable organisations, received the Pope outside. He blessed them and addressed a brief greeting to them.

“I greet you warmly and am pleased to meet all of you who are charity workers here in Georgia. Through your care, you express in an eloquent way love of neighbour which is the hallmark of Christ’s disciples. I thank Father Zurab for his words offered on your behalf. You represent a variety of charitable centres in the country: male and female religious institutes, Caritas, Church associations and other organisations, and groups of volunteers. To each one I offer my appreciation for your generous commitment to those most in need.

Your work is a journey of fraternal cooperation among the Christians of this country and the faithful of various rites. Our meeting in the name of evangelical charity is a witness to communion and a means of fostering the way of unity. I encourage you to pursue this demanding yet fruitful path: the poor and weak are the ‘flesh of Christ’ who call upon Christians of every confession, urging them to act without personal interests, following only the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

I offer a special greeting to the elderly, the sick, the suffering and those assisting them from various charitable organisations. I am happy to be with you for a little while to offer you my encouragement: God never turns away; He is always close to you, ready to listen, to give you His strength in times of difficulty. You are the beloved of Jesus, Who wished to identify Himself with all who suffer, He Himself having suffered in His passion. Charitable initiatives are the ripe fruit of a Church that serves, offers hope and shows forth God's mercy. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, your mission is a great one! Continue to live out charity in the Church and to manifest this charity in all areas of society with the zealous love that comes from God.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, icon of gratuitous love, guide you and protect you. May the blessing of the Lord sustain you, which I now willingly invoke upon all of you".

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