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Audience with a delegation from the Belgian Christian weekly “Tertio”

This morning the Holy Father Francis received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, a delegation from the Belgian Christian weekly “Tertio”, on the occasion of their twentieth anniversary.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, welcome!

I am pleased to meet you, collaborators with the Christian weekly “*Tertio*”, which is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. I wish you a fruitful pilgrimage to Rome and congratulate you on everything you do in the field of information and communication. I thank Msgr. Smet and Mr. Van Lierde for their words of introduction.

In the society in which we live, information forms an integral part of our daily life. When it is of good quality, it enables us to understand better the problems and challenges that the world is called to face, and inspires individual, family and social behaviour. In particular, the presence of Christian media specializing in quality information on the life of the Church in the world, capable of contributing to the formation of consciences, is very important.

Besides, the very name of your weekly publication, “Tertio”, refers to Saint John Paul II’s apostolic Letter “*Tertio millennio adveniente*”, written in view of

the great Jubilee of the year 2000, to prepare hearts to receive Christ and His liberating message. This reference, therefore, is not only a call for hope, but also aims to make the voice of the Church and that of Christian intellectuals heard in an increasingly secularized media scene, with the purpose of enriching it with constructive reflections. Seeking a positive view of people and facts, rejecting prejudices, it is a matter of

fostering a culture of encounter through which it is possible to know reality with a confident outlook.

Also noteworthy is the contribution of the Christian media to the growth of a new lifestyle in Christian communities, free from all forms of preconception and exclusion. In fact – as we know – “gossip closes the heart to the community, closes off the unity of the Church. The great gossip is the devil, who always goes about saying bad things about others, because he is the liar who seeks to separate the Church to distance brothers and sisters and not create community” (*Angelus*, 6 September 2020).

Communication is an important mission for the Church. Christians engaged in this field are called to put into effect, in a very concrete way, the Lord’s invitation to go out into the world and to proclaim the Gospel (see *Mk* 16: 15). Because of his lofty professional conscience, the Christian journalist is required to offer a new witness in the world of communication without hiding the truth, nor manipulating information. Indeed, “Amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its happenings with a tender gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another” (*Message for the 54th World Social Communications Day*, 24 January 2020). You are protagonists of this “narrative”.

The Christian information professional must therefore be a spokesperson of hope, a bearer of trust in the future. Because only when the future is welcomed as a positive and possible reality, can the present too become livable. These reflections can also help us, especially today, to nurture hope in the pandemic situation the world is going through. You are sowers of this hope in a better tomorrow. In the context of this crisis, it is important that the means of social communication contribute to ensuring that people do not sicken from loneliness and may receive a word of comfort.

Dear friends, I renew my encouragement for your efforts and thank God for your testimony during these twenty years, which have enabled your weekly publication to gain a good reputation. As Saint John Paul II pointed out, “To you who work in the field of culture and communication, the Church looks with confidence and expectation since ... you are called to interpret the present time and identify ways for communicating the Gospel according to the language and sensibility of the contemporary human person” (Address to participants in the Conference for those working in communications and culture promoted by the Italian Episcopal Conference, 9 November 2002).

I entrust your work in the service of the encounter between people and society to the protection of the Holy Virgin. May she turn her gaze towards each and every one of you and help you to be faithful disciples of her Son in your profession. I bless all the “*Tertio*” collaborators, their family members, and readers of the publication. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me. Thank you.
