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Audience with managers and staff of the National Civil Aviation Authority

The following is the Holy Father Francis' address to the managers and staff of the National Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC), whom he received in audience this morning:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Directors and staff of ENAC, good morning and welcome

I am pleased to meet you and to welcome each one of you, your families and the representatives of your international partners. I thank the president for his words, which evoked the purpose of the Civil Aviation Authority.

You are part of the multifaceted aviation sector, which deserves to be encouraged and supported, since it is among those most affected by the pandemic. Civil aviation has contributed to the development of the contemporary world, bringing distant peoples closer together and making them better known. You put professionalism and facilities at the service of society to ensure flight and passenger safety, both during aviation operations and on the ground at airports. This activity, in addition to being an effective tool for regulating and controlling flights, has taken on the characteristics of a valuable social asset.

Indeed, with your work, you offer an indispensable service to the nation and its citizens, contributing significantly to the development of its European and global vocation. Thousands of passengers can travel to other cities and countries, for business, for tourism, for family reasons, and thus get to know different cultures and traditions. In this way, knowledge, collaboration and mutual exchanges in the cultural, economic and religious spheres are fostered. How important your work is for the development of these human and social relations on an international level! In the face of the recurring temptation to go back to raising national barriers, it stands out all the more that your work is at the service of encounter and brotherhood.

In stark contrast to this perspective are the cases where aviation is used as an instrument of offence, destruction

and death. We are unfortunately seeing this also in this terrible war in Ukraine, marked daily by aerial bombardments. In the face of this desolating scenario, the hope that the skies will always and only be skies of peace, that we can fly in peace to forge and consolidate relations of friendship and peace, presses stronger in our hearts. Aviation is friendship, it is encounter!

One of your concerns is the implementation of suitable programmes for the prevention of serious accidents on means of transport. In this regard, I hope that the National Day “Lest We Forget”, designed to remember the victims of the tragic Linate accident, will be an opportunity to raise awareness in civil aviation of the centrality of the passenger and the value of each and every person. I encourage you to continue this annual appointment, and I congratulate you because you know how to experience it in its religious and human dimension, which for you finds its point of reference in the Holy House of Loreto, your Patroness, to whom you are particularly devoted.

Our Lady, whom the Christian people venerate with special affection in this month of May, teaches us to walk through life with our feet on the ground, sharing the joys and sufferings of those around us; and at the same time, to always keep our gaze raised to the horizon of heaven, with our hearts open to God and to his grace that saves us.

Dear friends, I reiterate to you and your colleagues my appreciation for the work you do, well aware of how delicate and tiring it is, especially for the entrepreneurial situations of the various airline companies, when they have to reduce staff or enter into partnerships with other companies: please, people must be protected, so that from one day to the next they are not left without a job. Work is wealth. And for this, I urge you to work among yourselves in a spirit of solidarity, sincerity and friendship, to foster mutual relationships that help you to face even difficult times with confidence. I entrust you and your families to the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Loreto and I bless you from my heart. Please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.
