



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Audience with Members of the “Nolite Timere” Association

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the “Nolite Timere” Association, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its founding.

The following is the Pope’s greeting to those present during the meeting:

Greeting of the Holy Father

I greet all of you who have come to the Vatican early in the morning, from Giugliano and other localities. I have come to know that there was an accident and two more buses are yet to arrive: greet them on my behalf. I welcome you on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of your Association, established in aid of children of the *Cité des Jeunes Nazareth* in Mbare, in Rwanda, on the initiative of Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, who was then – you get things done, don’t you? – who was then apostolic nuncio in that country, and the late parish priest, Don Tommaso Cuciniello. It was Saint John Paul II who supported this initiative, to assist the many orphans caused by the terrible genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Ah, that genocide was terrible, it was terrible ... Never forget, lest it happen again.

Your slogan says: “Give the hope to start again!”. Starting again. It is very good, and it is good that you have lived it in a concrete way, welcoming hundreds of children in the *Cité* and, via long-distance adoption, providing the means for their sustenance and their schooling and religious formation. By the way, thanks are also due to the Congregation of the Bizeramariya Sisters and the priests of the diocese of Kabgayi, whose bishop I greet.

The logo of the *Cité* depicts a Rwandan bread basket, a symbol of solidarity and sharing. And this reminds us, in a world where walls and divisions between people and populations seem increasingly to multiply, that charity has no barriers, as your history shows. In fact, through the contribution of many people, members, volunteers, and benefactors, for a quarter of a century you have been working together for children, with an open spirit and unconditional love, united by a common desire to give them back their smiles and a hope for the future. Because - let us remember - war and weapons take away the smile and the future from children, and that is tragic. On the

other hand, it is good that you propose, in solidarity, to create opportunities for friendship, giving rise to relationships that last over time. In this way a network of affection is created that extends beyond the circumstances of the moment, transcending differences of age, nationality, culture and social condition.

This shows us that being “volunteers” is far more than providing a service or giving an economic contribution: “It is a choice that ... opens us to other people’s needs” – the volunteer is open to other people’s needs – it makes us “artisans of mercy: with our hands, with our eyes, with an attentive ear, with closeness” (*Video Message with the prayer intention for the month of December 2022*).

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for what you do, thank you! To Our Lady, Queen of Peace, venerated in the Church of the Annunziata in Giugliano, and to Saint Julian the Martyr, Patron Saint of the city, whom you celebrate today, we entrust your work together. Let us pray for an end to violence and conflict in the world, because of which still, unfortunately, too many children continue to suffer, to be exploited and to die, and let us echo, with strength, the words of Saint Paul VI: "Never again war!" (*Address to the United Nations, 4 October 1965*). Never again!

I bless you, together with your loved ones, and I ask you, please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.
