



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR OF FAITH

Clementine Hall

Monday, 25 November 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The Year of Faith, which concluded yesterday, was a providential occasion for believers to rekindle the flame of faith, that flame which was entrusted to us on the day of our Baptism so that we might guard and share it. During this special Year, you have generously given of your time and abilities especially to serve the spiritual journeys of the various groups of faithful that were proposed through suitable pastoral initiatives. On behalf of the Church I thank all of you and together let us thank the Lord for all the good that he has given us to accomplish.

In this time of grace we have been able to rediscover the essence of the Christian journey, in which faith, together with charity, has first place.

Faith, in fact, is the cornerstone of the Christian experience because it motivates the decisions and actions of our daily lives. Faith is the inexhaustible wellspring of all our actions within our families, at work, in the parish, with friends and in various social situations. And we see this steadfast and genuine faith especially in moments of difficulty and trial. It is then that the Christian allows himself to be taken into God's arms and that he clings to him with the assurance of entrusting himself to a love as strong as an indestructible rock. We are able to offer a good witness precisely in these situations of suffering, if we abandon ourselves to God with humility.

Dear friends, your precious volunteer service at the various events of the Year of Faith has given you the opportunity to understand better than others the enthusiasm of the various groups of people who were involved. Together we must truly praise the Lord for the spiritual intensity and apostolic ardour brought forth by the many pastoral initiatives in these months in Rome, and all

over the world. Let us be witnesses that faith in Christ can warm hearts, thus becoming a true driving force for the new evangelization. A faith lived deeply and with conviction tends to open itself to proclaiming the Gospel far and wide. It is faith that makes our communities missionary! Indeed we need Christian communities committed to a courageous apostolate that reaches people where they are, even in the most difficult situations.

Your experience during the Year of Faith will first help all of you to open yourselves and your communities to an encounter with others. This is important, I would say essential! Especially to open yourselves to those whose lives are poorest in faith and hope. We speak a lot about poverty, but we do not always think about those who are poor in faith: there are many. There are many people who need of an act of human kindness, a smile or a true word, a witness by which they may grasp the closeness of Jesus Christ. May this sign of love and tenderness which is born from faith be lacking to no one.

I thank you again and I invoke upon you and your families the blessing of the Lord.