



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO A DELEGATION OF THE CIRCLE OF ST. PETER

*Hall of the Popes
Saturday, 26 June 2010*

Dear Members of the Circle of St Peter,

I am glad to welcome you on the occasion of this pleasant meeting which gives me the opportunity to renew to you my gratitude for your generous work at the service of the Holy See. This meeting is taking place in the imminence of the liturgical Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul and, in a certain way, gives us a foretaste of the joy of this annual event that is so important for your praiseworthy Sodality and for the entire Church. I greet you all with affection, starting with your President General, Duke Leopoldo Torlonia, whom I thank for his kind words to me on behalf of all, and with your Chaplain.

We have just concluded the [Year for Priests](#), a time of grace during which the Church reflected with special attention on St John Mary Vianney, the Holy Curé d'Ars, commemorating the 150th anniversary of his death. He is a model of evangelical life, not only for priests but also for lay people, especially for those who, like you, work in the vast field of charity. One special aspect of the life of this humble priest was in fact his detachment from material goods. He possessed nothing, he gave everything to the neediest; he felt no need to possess anything for himself: he considered things superfluous. He had learned as a child to love the poor, seeing how they were welcomed and helped by his parents at home. In the course of his priestly life, this love led him to distribute to others all that he had. He also founded a home, which he called "Providence", for poor little girls and young women: he left no stone unturned to ensure that they received a sound Christian education. May his example be for you, dear members of St Peter's Circle, a constant invitation to open your arms wide to every person who needs a tangible sign of solidarity. Continue to be this material sign of the Pope's charity for all those in need, in both the material and spiritual sense, as well as for the pilgrims who come to Rome from every part of the world to visit the tombs

of the Apostles and to meet the Successor of Peter.

As has just been recalled, today you have come here to present to me the Peter's Pence collected in the churches of Rome. I would like to express my deep gratitude to you for this attestation of your sharing in my concern for the most deprived people. It represents, as it were, a point of convergence between two complementary actions that embrace each other in a single eloquent testimony of evangelical charity since, on the one hand it shows the affection of this city's inhabitants and of the pilgrims for the Successor of Peter, and, on the other, it expresses the material solidarity of the Holy See for the many situations of hardship and poverty that unfortunately continue to exist in Rome and in so many parts of the world. By bringing the Roman parishes closer and by managing centres for assistance and counselling in the Capital, you can have a direct understanding of the many situations of poverty that are still present; at the same time, you are able to note how strong the people's desire is to know Christ and love him in their brothers and sisters.

Through this commitment to meet the needs of the less fortunate, you spread a message of hope which springs from faith and adherence to the Lord, thereby making yourselves heralds of his Gospel. May charity and witness therefore continue to be the guidelines of your apostolate. I encourage you to persevere in your action joyfully, ceaselessly drawing inspiration from the unfailing Christian principles and finding ever new vigour in prayer and in the spirit of sacrifice as your motto says to bring abundant fruits of good to both the Christian Community and civil society.

I entrust your aspiration, resolutions and every one of your activities to the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin, *Salus Populi Romani* so that she may guide your footsteps, making you increasingly staunch operators of solidarity and builders of peace in all the contexts where your praiseworthy association works. With these wishes, I invoke the heavenly intercession of Sts Peter and Paul and gladly impart to each one of you, to your families and to all those you meet in your daily service a special Apostolic Blessing.

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