



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO A DELEGATION OF FRENCH PARLIAMENTARIANS
FROM THE GROUPE D'AMITIE FRANCE-SAINT SIEGE***

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 15 June 2013*

Mr President, Dear Members of Parliament,

Accepting your request, I am glad to receive you this morning, members of the Senate and National Assembly of the French Republic. Beyond the diverse political sensibilities that you represent, your presence here shows the good relations that exist between your country and the Holy See.

This meeting gives me an opportunity to underline the relations of trust that generally exist in France between those responsible for civil life and those for the Catholic Church, whether at the national level or at the regional and local levels. The principle of secularism that governs relations between the French State and different religious confessions must not be taken to mean hostility to the reality of religion, or exclusion of religion from the social arena and the debates that animate them. We can rejoice at the fact that French society is rediscovering the proposals made by the Church, among others, that offer a vision of the person, and of his or her dignity in view of the common good. The Church wishes in this way to offer her own specific contribution to profound issues that constitute a more complete picture of the person and of his or her destiny, of society and of its destiny. This contribution lies not only in the anthropological or social sphere, but also in the political, economic and cultural spheres.

As representatives in a nation to which the eyes of the world are often turned, it is your duty, I believe, to contribute in an effective and consistent way to the improvement of the lives of your fellow citizens whom you meet especially through the innumerable local relationships which you cultivate that make you sensitive to their true needs. Your job is certainly technical and legal, and consists in proposing laws, in amending them or even repealing them. But it is also necessary to

instill in them something more, a spirit. I would call it a soul, one that does not only reflect the trends and ideas of the moment, but gives them the indispensable quality that elevates and ennobles the human person.

Therefore, I offer to you my warmest encouragement to proceed with your mission, always searching for the good of the person and always promoting brotherhood in your country. May God bless you.