



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO CHILDREN TAKING PART IN THE INITIATIVE "CHILDREN'S TRAIN"
SPONSORED BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE CULTURE**

*Atrium of the Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 31 May 2014*

Bravo, you in the orchestra, and *bravo* you the singers! You were very good. Thank you!
[applause]

You have given me several gifts. One was of earth from the catacombs. You, did you give that to me?

[a boy] *Yes, me!*

You, there. And the other gift, for you brought me another gift, a plant. Who brought the plant? ... a plant. And you said to me: "it is the plant of light..." how did it go? The plant of light to make the world... I can't hear....

[children] ... *better!*

Better! Here inside is earth from the catacombs...

[a boy] ... *from the catacombs of San Gennaro!*

San Gennaro! Those are the most important ones, no?

[children] *Yes!*

Why are they in Naples? [he laughs and they laugh] You're clever, you Neapolitans! But tell me:

are the catacombs on the beach, in the light of the sun?

No!

No. Where are they, the catacombs?

Underground.

Underground. And in the catacombs, is there light?

No!

What is there?

Darkness.

Darkness. But you brought me earth from the dark... What does this earth from the dark signify? What does earth from the dark mean? Who knows? Who can tell me? Why did you bring me "earth from the dark"? Louder... Louder, I can't hear you...

To give it light.

To give it light. The dark is for the light: when there is night, it is entirely dark. But we wait for the early morn, when light comes. What is more important — this I ask you — the dark or the light?

Light!

Light! And when we are in the dark, what should we do? Where should we go? ...

... to the light.

To the light, searching...

... for the light.

The light inside of us, always. Because light gives us joy, it gives us hope. And do we all have the possibility of finding the light?

[A little girl] Yes!

Well, you are a good girl! You have no doubt! Tell them: do we have the possibility?

Yes!

Everyone, now: do we have the possibility?

[Children] Yes!

Yes! Because good things are in the light, in the light you can do what you told me about while you were giving me the plant: to bear fruit that will help us make the world...?

Better!

Better. And can one make a better world?

Yes!

Better than this world?

Yes!

Yes. And better than the world I live in?

Yes!

Yes. And how does one make the world better? With hatred, can you do it with hate?

No!

Good, say it, say it out loud!

With love!

With love. With love. Everyone together, like brothers and sisters, fighting beside one another out of love. And because of that I am going to tell you something: when the Apostle John, who was a great friend of Jesus — a very great friend — wanted to say who God is, do you know what he said? “God is love”. Beautiful. Who is God?

He is love!

Louder!

Love!

God is love. And we move towards the light to find the love of God. But is God's love within us, even in the dark moments? Is the love of God there, hidden away? Yes, always! The love of God never leaves us. It is always with us. Do we trust in this love?

Yes.

Thank you for your visit, I am happy to meet you, happy that we met all together. I am very glad.

So are we!

You too?

So are we!

Are any of you unhappy?

No!

Good. That's good, that's good.

We are happy... We love you.

Thank you so much! And now I will pray to the Lord for you, that he make of you boys, girls, adolescents, men and women who carry his love forward. When God's love goes forth, everything goes well. And now I would like to give you my blessing. Each one of you think inside your heart of the people you love, that they may be blessed.

[Blessing]

Very good... and isn't there another song?

Yes...

Then let's sing another...