



The Holy See

REETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF THE GALILEO FOUNDATION

*Consistory Hall
Friday, 8 February 2019*

[Multimedia]

Dear Friends,

I extend cordial greetings to you, the trustees and benefactors of the Galileo Foundation, and willingly take this opportunity to convey my appreciation for your generous commitment to the Church's pastoral mission. Your sponsorship of a wide variety of projects expresses something of the very universality of the Church herself.

As lay people, with unique ways of following the Lord in your own specific vocations and responsibilities, you have an essential part to play in making known the saving message of the Gospel to the people of our time, and especially to the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. I encourage you to keep on generously offering such important witness.

I would like principally to emphasize your contribution to raising awareness of the plight of those who suffer from poverty and exploitation, especially those entrapped by the deadly crime of human trafficking. This is an urgent and essential duty for today's Christians. As such, it is surely no coincidence that we meet on the feast day of Saint Josephine Bakhita, the patron of victims of human trafficking. She knew from painful experience the reality of slavery and its humiliating and violent consequences. Yet, by God's grace, she also came to know true freedom and joy. Her holiness of life is a summons not only to fight with greater determination against modern forms of slavery which are an open wound on the body of society, a scourge upon the body of Christ and a crime against humanity (cf. [*Address to the International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking, 10 April 2014*](#)), but also to learn from her great example. What does she say to us? She teaches us how to attend to the poor with tenderness, gentleness and compassion.

Dear friends, in your ongoing projects and work, may you be sustained by an ever deeper rootedness in prayer, by the intercession of Saint Josephine Bakhita and by the strength that the Holy Spirit alone can give. And as you serve the Lord, I invoke God's blessings of joy and peace upon you and your families. I thank you for your prayers and ask you please to continue to pray for me. Thank you.