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Audience with members of the “Pro Petri Sede” Association

At 12.20 today, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the *Pro Petri Sede* Association, gathered in Rome for their traditional pilgrimage.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear friends,

I joyfully welcome you, members of the *Pro Petri Sede* Association, on your pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle Peter to reaffirm your faith and renew yourselves in your charitable mission to others.

Your visit takes place at the beginning of Lent, a favourable time to refocus on the heart of the Catholic faith and on the mission of the Church, in which every baptized person must take part. Faced with a world marked by indifference, violence, selfishness and pessimism, it is useful to ask ourselves today if it does not suffer from a lack of charity, both in hearts and in relationships with God and with others. It is the question I posed in the Message for Lent 2018: has charity been extinguished in our hearts? It is worth facing the truth directly! And to use the remedies that God Himself gives us in the Church. Prayer restores us to the path of truth about ourselves and God; fasting makes us share the situation of many people who face the torment of hunger and makes us more attentive to others; almsgiving is a blessed opportunity to collaborate with God’s Providence for the benefit of His children. And I invite you to make almsgiving a way of life and to persevere in concrete help to those in need. Your commitment asks you always to be careful to offer, in addition to material help, the warmth of feeling welcomed, the delicacy of respect and fraternity, without which no one can regain courage and hope again in the future.

I reiterate my appreciation and my encouragement for your mission, inviting you to carry it forth daily in personal and community prayer, remembering the people you support. Also entrusting them to the Lord is part of your

mission, and you thus build ecclesial communion, because we are all children of the same Father. With your generous offering to the Successor of Peter, you contribute to the Church's mission to support every person, especially the poorest and those who have lost everything as a result of forced migration. I thank you in their name for your help and your spiritual closeness.

Dear friends, let us ask the Lord to convert our hearts so that charity may grow on earth and that there may finally be an end to conflicts, the cause of countless evils. May this pilgrimage increase charity within you, as well as the desire to confess your faith every day and to witness it where you live! I also invite you to pray for the young, so that the next Synod dedicated to them may enable in particular a revival of priestly and religious vocations in your countries.

By entrusting each of you and your families, and the members of your Association, to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Peter and the Saints of your countries, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing. And I ask you: do not forget to pray for me.
