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Audience with members of the National Notarial Fund

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the National Notarial Fund on the occasion of the centenary of its foundation.

We publish below the speech that the Holy Father addressed to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Distinguished representatives of the National Notarial Fund,

I am pleased to welcome you at the end of the centenary year of the foundation of this pension fund. I cordially greet you, beginning with the president, whom I thank for his words. Your pension plan has a twofold purpose: to provide an additional cheque for every notary in business whose fees do not reach a certain threshold; and to provide assistance to retired notaries and their families who are in a situation of particular need.

Both aspects are inspired by the principle of solidarity, fostering a sense of community within the category. In addition to these two main aims of your institution, there are other activities of assistance in favour of the training of notaries in their first role, who find themselves in conditions of hardship, as well as the granting of study grants to the children of notaries in precarious economic conditions. I encourage you to maintain these lines of mutual support, which relate to your identity as well as to your history. They are characteristic elements that make your business more credible and inspire appreciation for you.

In a social context increasingly marked by the desire to compete on the “highway” of profit, which obliges you always to move in the fast lane, you are called to exercise your role in a spirit of authentic service. Your presence in the dialectic of bargaining is the seal not only of legality, of which you are the guardians, but of balance and thoughtfulness and therefore, in the final analysis, of justice. In the challenges before you, you help society to become more human by listening and bringing your knowledge closer to everyone. It is a matter of mediating between the law and socio-economic needs with the rigour that is proper to the notary, providing a

proper application of the rules, but also through the careful care of people's expectations and their need for certainty and protection. In the context of his activity the notary, in order to be consistent with his profession, will strive to nurture a sincere sensitivity to the dignity and rights of the people who turn to him; he will not fail to defend as indispensable principles all that is right and all that is true, without forgetting charity, the principal virtue necessary in interpersonal relationships.

As Vatican Council II recalls, " we are witnesses of the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by this responsibility to his brothers and to history" (*Gaudium et spes*, 55). This affirmation induces the operators of the different sectors of public life to be protagonists of an effective and fraternally just service, in order to collaborate in the realization of a social order that responds more faithfully to the law of God and to the ethical norms that derive from it.

The delicate profession of notary occupies an important place in the structure of every society. Technical competence and moral integrity are a guarantee for the proper exercise of this important service to the community. These are values which are necessary in the practice of every person's professional activity, but which become indispensable in you, as intermediaries between the individual or the social group which makes use of your function and the established juridical order of which you are called to be faithful interpreters and performers. All this must drive you towards an ever deeper knowledge of the legal system, with your gaze turned at all times to the greater good of the human being and of society itself, that is, to the common good.

I encourage you to continue to act with solicitude towards all those who turn to you, and always to inspire your Mutual Assistance Fund with fundamental values. I invoke the Lord's blessing on you, on each of you, on your families, that the Lord may bless you all; and also on all those you represent here. And I ask you please to pray for me. Thank you.
