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Audience with directors and staff of the Vatican Inspectorate of Public Security

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience the directors and staff of the Vatican Inspectorate of Public Security, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Mr. Chief of Police,

Mr. Prefect and Mr. Director,

Dear Officials and Agents, welcome!

I am pleased to meet you in this customary appointment at the beginning of the year. I greet all of you, your family members and the Chaplains, who accompany you in your path of Christian life.

And I want to say thank you. First of all, thank you for the faithful and patient work with which you guarantee that everyone who comes to the Vatican, from Italy and abroad, the possibility of experiencing moments of faith and prayer, as pilgrims, or simply of leisure, as tourists, in a serene atmosphere of order and security. This is a delicate commitment, which deserves all the more appreciation because it is carried out daily, every day - and night! - of the year. Thank you!

I then want to thank you, together with your families, also for the readiness and adaptability with which you provide for my safety and that of my co-workers when I travel and move around Rome and other Italian locations, often taking on inconvenient and uncomfortable schedules and logistical requirements: thank you from my heart!

Yours is a job with many facets, consisting of patient prevention, vigilance in the field, management of

unforeseen, sometimes dangerous situations, in most cases dealt with discreetly and inconspicuously. It is a job that requires courage, tact, steady nerves, attention and understanding for the needs and criticalities of those who ask for your help and also of those who make your intervention necessary with problematic behaviour of various kinds.

Saint John XXIII used to say that the work of the forces of order is a burdensome task, that requires high moral qualities and above all dedication and sacrifice for the attainment of the common good. Therefore, he defined you as “good servants of the human community and builders of peace in society” (cf. *Address to the Participants in the 16th International "Rallye" of the European Police Corps*, Castelgandolfo, 8 September 1961).

These are words laden with meaning that well express both the - sometimes very demanding - expectations of you and the ideals that inspire you. And yet it is so. The common good and peace in society cannot be improvised and do not always flourish spontaneously. The lights and shadows of our human nature, limited and wounded by sin, entail the need for there to be those who, when faced with evil, do not stand by and watch, but take the responsibility to intervene, to protect the victims and bring the transgressors back to order, always having the good of all at heart.

And it is perhaps because of this commitment at the forefront that the “blue cars” often become points of reference also for the many needs, less institutional but no less important at a human level, that you also take on board: from the request for information, minor unexpected events, or for those who turn to you to express a discomfort, or because, feeling marginalized, they seek a little understanding and empathy. Yes, because people know that “where there is a uniform, you can trust”. And this is very important.

Therefore, dear friends, I reiterate my thanks and I bless you and your families, entrusting you to the intercession of Mary Most Holy and Saint Michael Archangel, your Patron. I pray for you, and please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.
