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Audience with members of the “Msgr. Camillo Faresin” Foundation of Maragnole di Breganze, Vicenza

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the “Msgr. Camillo Faresin” Foundation of Maragnole di Breganze, Vicenza, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its founding.

The following is the address prepared by the Pope for the occasion, which was read out by Msgr. Filippo Ciampanelli:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to meet you on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of your Foundation. Today you bring with you twenty years rich in initiatives in the service of the least, following the footsteps of Msgr. Camillo Faresin, who was for a long time Bishop of Guiratinga in Mato Grosso, an example of missionary sensibility and faith in Providence, and also his two brothers: Don Santo, also a Salesian missionary, and Don Giovanni Battista, a diocesan priest.

You set out to pick up the mantle of their charity, embracing their tenacity and broadmindedness in serving their neighbour. And this has led you to carry out your work in Brazil, in Italy and in other parts of the world, extending it to different fields: from education to social assistance, to health care, to the provision of decent living conditions and job opportunities for so many people.

Looking at your effort, I would like to emphasize and encourage two important lines of action: *working among the last* and *working together*.

First: *working among the last*. Msgr. Faresin and his brothers were people of humble extraction. They learned the value of charity and missionary fervour in the context of a simple, devout, modest and dignified family, a family like so many of our own. In that environment, they were able to perceive, with God's grace, a message and an invitation for their future to *stay among the last to help the last*, and they did so with tireless love, with generosity and intelligence, even amid great difficulties. Let us recall, in this regard, that the name of Bishop Camillo is listed, in Jerusalem, among those of the "Garden of the Righteous", precisely because, even before being able to set out for Brazil, held up in Rome due to the second world war, he did not allow the circumstances to stop him, working with charity and courage to assist persecuted Jews.

This is how he was throughout his life, as a priest and then as a bishop, with an irresistible urge to be close to the most unfortunate. Until, at the end of his episcopal mandate, he asked and obtained permission to remain among his people, in Mato Grosso, until his death, as a *humble servant of the humble*, thus continuing in the shadows, as a friend and companion, the same ministry he had carried out for so many years as a guide and pastor.

He left us a great example to imitate: to stay with the last, always! But how? By choosing and favouring, in your projects, the poorest and most neglected situations as special places to stay in, and as "promised lands" towards which to set out and in which to "pitch your tents" so as to begin new works (cf. *Dt 1:8*). And do this with a tangible presence, close to the communities you serve, from within, on the ground, working among the poor and sharing in their lives as much as possible. This is the only way, in fact, to feel the "pulse" of the real needs of the brothers and sisters the Lord puts on our path; and above all to be enriched by the light, strength and wisdom that come from being with Jesus, uniquely present in the most suffering members of his Body.

And we come to the second point: *working together*. In your activities, I urge you always to seek collaboration, among yourselves and in other religious and associative settings. I know that you already cooperate, in various works, with the Missionary Sisters of Divine Will of Bassano del Grappa, and with other organizations. It is the right path. Indeed, working together is already in itself a proclamation of the lived Gospel; and for you, as well as being an intelligent way of optimizing resources, it is a way of formation in charity and communion. You emphasized this by entitling a recent event of yours "*Acting together to progress together*". Precisely this: acting together does not mean only *doing* good, but also and above all *growing united* in goodness, serving and supporting each other.

Working together, finally, is also an expression of faith in Divine Providence. Msgr. Faresin defined it as "the wellspring that most guarantees resources" for the work that God requires. And the most important resources for the works of the Lord are not things, but rather ourselves, wisely placed close to one another so that we share what we are: our passion, our creativity, our skills and experience, and also our weaknesses and frailties. From this patient pooling, in the appreciation of each person's contribution, come fruits of great dynamism and tangibility, as the past and present history of your Foundation testifies.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for what you do and for how you do it; and because in so doing you keep alive the memory of the great and generous heart of Msgr. Camillo Faresin. May Our Lady keep you in humble and courageous charity. I bless you and your families; and I ask you, please, to pray for me.
