



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PONTIFICAL GESTATORIAL CHAIR BEARERS
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

*Consistory Hall
Friday, 10 January 2014*

It is my pleasure and joy to welcome you for this exchange of good wishes, along with your families. We are at the start of a new year and still living in the liturgical season of Christmas, which will close this Sunday with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. The mystery of the birth of Jesus calls us to witness by our lives to the humility, the simplicity and the spirit of service that he taught us. Also in your daily work, you have the possibility of imitating these characteristics of the Son of God, “who came not to be served, but to serve” (Mt 20:28). Lived out with this interior attitude, work can become an apostolate, a precious occasion to transmit to those you encounter the joy of being Christian. This is possible if we stay in active dialogue with the Lord through prayer, in order to grow in his friendship and to learn from him how to be ready to welcome.

In these months I have become aware of the ideals that inspire your work. Love for the Church and the Holy See, welcoming warmth, patience, calm and serene behaviour: these constitute a nice visiting card for those who come to the Apostolic Palace to meet the Pope. For all of this, I thank you warmly — really, I thank you warmly — and I feel indebted to you! I also thank you for the tenderness with which you bring the little children to me during public audiences. I asked one of you: “And you, how many children do you have? Because you know how to carry them, it shows!”.

I renew my good wishes to you for peace and every good; I assure you of my prayer for you, and I am counting on yours as well! Thank you!

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