The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING ORGANIZED BY THE

PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF MARY ON THE OCCASION OF THE

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE

ANTI-MAFIA INVESTIGATIVE DIRECTORATE (D.I.A.)

Clementine Hall

Wednesday, 23 June 2022

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to meet you today and to share, along with all those who form part of the Institutions you represent and your families, the thirtieth anniversary of your work in the service of the people. I thank the president of the Pontifical Academy of Mary for his words. Fraternal co-existence and social friendship are possible where there are “homes” that put into practice the “pact between generations”, conserving in a synodal way the “healthy roots” of those who believed and believe in the beauty of being together which is developed through dialogue, in kindness and in support of justice for all. Thanks to these “homes”, it is possible to build, like one big family open to the common good, able to spread a culture of legality, respect and safety of people and also of the environment.

You are all actively engaged in the building of these “homes”: they act as mild and strong antibodies against vested interests, corruption, greed, and violence, which are the DNA of mafia and criminal organizations. Mafias win when fear takes hold of life, which is why they take over mind and heart, stripping people of their dignity and freedom from within. You who are here are working to ensure that fear cannot win: you are therefore a support for change, a glimmer of light in the midst of darkness, a testimony to freedom. I encourage you to continue on this path: be strong and bring hope, especially among the weakest.

When security and legality are lacking, the first to be harmed are indeed the most fragile, and all those who in various ways can consider themselves the “last”. All these are the modern slaves on which mafia economies are built; they are the rejected that they need to pollute social life and the environment itself. Therefore, I urge you to stand with these people, victims of oppression, seeking to prevent and combat crime. It is also important to resist mafia cultural colonialism, through research, study and educational activities, aimed at demonstrating that civil, social and environmental progress stems not from corruption and privilege, but rather from justice, freedom, honesty and solidarity. In addition, mafia thinking enters like cultural colonization, to the point that becoming *mafioso* is part of the culture, as if it were the path one must take. No! This will not do. This is a road to slavery. Your work does much to avoid this: thank you!

Your work, delicate and risky, deserves to be appreciated and supported. For my part, I encourage you to continue with enthusiasm, despite the presence in the social – and also ecclesial – fabric of some grey areas where it is difficult to perceive a clear separation from old ways of acting, erroneous and even immoral. It is necessary for everyone, at every level, to embark decisively on the path of justice and honesty. And where there is connivance and opacity, the causes must be studied, leaving the right space to a healthy “shame”, without which change is not possible, and mutual collaboration for the common good remains a chimera.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you, therefore, for what you are and what you do. Do not tire of standing beside the people with tenderness and compassion; always be promotors of this love for the people, for their life and future, which represents the synthesis of your very ideals, knowing that this love is capable of generating new relationships and giving life to a more just order, through “homes” and “families” enlivened by the leaven of equality, justice and fraternity.

I entrust you to the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of Jesus, a woman of faith and hope. May she guide you in this meaningful mission, so you may bear witness with joy to the Gospel of life. I accompany you all with my prayer and blessing, which I heartily invoke on you and your families, and I ask you to pray for me. Thank you.

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