The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO SCHOOL CHAPLAINS FROM ROMANDY, SWITZERLAND

Friday, 7 October 2022

[Multimedia]

Dear brother,
Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Thank you for letting me know about your experience of service, beside young students from Romandy, Switzerland. It is a demanding job, but which certainly gives a great deal to those who live it with strong motivation and a generous soul.

I thank your spokesperson for the presentation – very clear, also your final questions – which highlighted certain aspects of the reality of youth. This is valuable because it is not something you have read in books: it is the fruit of your being with the young people, accompanying them, listening to them... And also bringing them before the Lord, in prayer. It is there, in the silence, that the faces, the stories, the smiles and the tears, the dreams re-emerge... And it is there that you also find the interior impetus, because a job like yours absorbs a lot of energy and can exhaust the spirit if there is no “lifeblood” from the Lord to recharge it.

I like to see your work against the backdrop of the Synod for and with young people, which we experienced four years ago. That Synod, too, did not end with a beautiful final document, but was the culmination of an ecclesial journey that preceded and followed the assembly. And I would say that, with your being alongside young people, you too can, in a certain sense, write new pages of the Letter that came out of that Synod: the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit* (25 March 2019).

Every time one of you accompanies two or three young people on their journey, listening to them, listening to their disappointments, the failures and the doubts they carry within them, and then you

speak about Jesus Christ to them, reawakening hope in their hearts, there something of the experience of the disciples of Emmaus is renewed. It does not depend on how good you are: it is the living Christ who passes, it is his Spirit that acts; but it is important that you are there, your presence beside them is necessary. Being there, accompanying.

And another aspect that deserves to be underlined is the ecumenical one: you are Catholics and Protestants, and you work together. Once upon a time we burned each other! Now it is good, this working together, it is good, working in collaboration. And this is good, it gives good witness, and can help the Church to grow towards ever fuller unity, more in accordance with the will of Christ the Lord. I encourage you to go forward on this path.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you once again for your visit. I wish you all the best in your work. I bless you, your colleagues and your families from my heart. And I ask you, please, to pray for me.

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