



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN A CONFERENCE
SPONSORED BY THE VICARIATE OF ROME ENTITLED "
THE LAY CHRISTIAN'S MISSION IN THE CITY"**

Pontifical Lateran University, 7-8 March 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you are gathered at this conference hosted by the Vicariate of Rome with a view to deepening and strengthening your “mission as lay Christians in the City”, I address a warm greeting to you and I am close to you in prayer. In wishing you a fruitful and fraternal encounter, I would like to highlight a few essential aspects.

First of all, there is a fundamental element that pertains to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council: the fact that the lay faithful, in virtue of their Baptism, are protagonists in the work of evangelization and human advancement. Incorporated into the Church, every member of the People of God is an inseparable disciple and missionary. We always need to begin from this root common to all of us as children of Mother Church (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 120).

As a consequence of this common membership in the Church and participation in her mission, it is important not to see parishes as conflicting with lay ecclesial associations. The latter, in their variety and dynamism, are a resource for the Church, with their outreach into diverse environments and sectors of social life; however, it is a good thing for them to maintain a vital link with the pastoral body of the diocese and parishes, so as not to construct a partial reading of the Gospel and not to uproot themselves from Mother Church (cf. *ibid.*, n. 29).

Lastly, thinking of your “mission in the City”, in your contact with the complex issues of social and political life, I urge you to make habitual use of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the*

Church, a thorough and precious instrument. With the aid of this “compass”, I encourage you to work for the social inclusion of the poor, ever reserving to them priority in your religious and spiritual care (cf. *ibid.*, n. 200).

Invoking the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, I bless all of you and your work.

From the Vatican, 7 March 2014

FRANCIS

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana