The Holy See

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE ITALIAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE
[24-26 OCTOBER 2014, SALERNO]

Dear Young People,

I cordially greet you on the occasion of the National Conference, organized by the Italian Episcopal Conference in Salerno on the theme: "*Hope amidst Precariousness*". The purpose of these days of reflection is to offer a perspective of hope, especially to the younger generations, in a time marked by uncertainty, confusion and great change.

During visits made in Italy, as well as at meetings with people, I have come into contact with the situation of so many young unemployed people, those who live on redundancy pay or in precarious situations. But this is not just an economic problem, it is a problem of dignity. Where there is no work, there is no dignity, the experience of the dignity of bringing bread home! And unfortunately in Italy there are so many young people without work.

To work means to be able to plan your own future, to decide to start a family! One truly has the impression that the moment we are experiencing epitomizes "the anxious suspense of the young". The "throw-away culture" is strong: anything that does not serve profit is cast away. The young are thrown away, because they have no work. But like this, the future of a people is thrown away, for the young are the future of the people. And we must say "no" to this "throw-away culture".

This is "precariousness". But then there is the other word: hope. Hope amidst instability. What shall we do to prevent ourselves being robbed of our hope by the "quicksands" of precariousness? By the strength of the Gospel. The Gospel is the source of hope, because it comes from God, because it comes from Jesus Christ who came to share every one of our insecurities.

You are young people who belong to the Church, and therefore you have the gift and the

responsibility to infuse the power of the Gospel into this social and cultural phenomenon.

And what does the Gospel do? The Gospel generates consideration for the other, a culture of encounter, of solidarity. Thus by the power of the Gospel you will be witnesses of hope in instability.

May the Lord bless the work of this Conference. I ask you to pray for me! I will pray for you too!

From the Vatican, 16 October 2014

FRANCIS

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