



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

*"Casina Pio IV", Lecture Hall of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences
Thursday, 10 April 2014*

*Your Eminences,
Dear Brothers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I greet each of you participating in this Conference, the second such gathering held here in the Vatican to promote united efforts against human trafficking. I thank Cardinal Nichols and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for organizing this meeting, and the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences for hosting it. This is a conference – an important conference – but it is also a sign: it is a sign of the Church and a sign of men and women of good will who want to cry out, "Enough!".

Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity. The very fact of our being here to combine our efforts means that we want our strategies and areas of expertise to be accompanied and reinforced by the mercy of the Gospel, by closeness to the men and women who are victims of this crime.

Our meeting today includes law enforcement authorities, who are primarily responsible for combating this tragic reality by a vigorous application of the law. It also includes humanitarian and social workers, whose task it is to provide victims with welcome, human warmth and the possibility of building a new life. These are two different approaches, but they can and must go together. To dialogue and exchange views on the basis of these two complementary approaches is quite important. Conferences such as this are extremely helpful, and, I would say, much needed.

I believe that one important sign of this is the fact that, one year after your first meeting, you have regrouped from throughout the world in order to advance your common efforts. I thank you for your readiness to work together. I pray that our Lord will assist you and that Our Lady will watch over you. Thank you.