



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE LENTEN BROTHERHOOD CAMPAIGN 2015 IN BRAZIL

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Brazil,

Lent is approaching, the time of preparation for Easter: a time of repentance, prayer and charity, a time to renew our lives, to identify with Jesus through his generous devotion to his brothers, especially those most in need. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops of Brazil, drawing inspiration from His words, “the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (cf. Mk 10:45), proposes as the theme for its Campaign this year: “Brotherhood: Church and Society”.

In fact the Church, as a community brought together by those who believe, turn their gaze toward “Jesus, the author of salvation and the principle of unity” (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 9), cannot be indifferent to the needs of those who are around her, for “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our age, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1). What shall we do? In the 40 days in which God calls his people to conversion, the Brotherhood Campaign seeks to help deepen, in the light of the Gospel, the dialogue and cooperation between Church and society — recommended by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council — as the service of building up the Kingdom of God, in the heart and in the life of the people of Brazil.

The contribution of the Church, with respect for the secular nature of the State (cf. *ibid.*, n. 76), and without forgetting the autonomy of earthly affairs (cf. *ibid.*, n. 36), is well expressed in her Social Doctrine, with which she seeks “to assume in a gospel spirit and from the perspective of the Kingdom, the crucial tasks that contribute to safeguard the dignity of every human being, and to

work together with other citizens and institutions for the good of humanity” (*Aparecida Document*, n. 384). This task is not reserved to institutions: each person must do his/her part, beginning from each one’s home, from work, along with the people we relate to. In practise, it is important to help those who are poorer and needier. Let us remember that “each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 187), above all knowing how to welcome, because “when we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them — some food, a place in our home, our time — not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched” (*Address to the Community of Varginha*, 25 July 2013). In this way let each one question his/her conscience on his/her practical and effective commitment to building a more just, fraternal and peaceful society.

Dear brothers and sisters, when Jesus tells us: “I have come to serve” (cf. Mk 10:45), He teaches us what epitomizes the Christian identity: to love while serving. For this reason my hope is that this year’s Lenten journey, in light of the recommendations of the Brotherhood Campaign, may predispose hearts to the new life that Christ offers us, and that the transforming power which arises from His Resurrection may reach everyone in his/her personal, family, social and culture dimension, and strengthen in every heart sentiments of fraternity and of active cooperation. To each of you, through the intercession of *Nossa Senhora Aparecida*, I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing, asking that you never stop praying for me.

From the Vatican, 2 February 2015

Francis PP.