



The Holy See

MEETING WITH THE PERSONNEL OF THE PONTIFICAL VILLAS

ADDRESS OF HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 14 July 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like first of all to thank the Bishop of Albano, the Mayor of Castel Gandolfo and the Director of the Pontifical Villas for their cordial welcome, which also expresses your sentiments and those of all the inhabitants of Castel Gandolfo. I thank each and every one of you for this welcome!

I have come here to spend a day meeting the citizens of Castel Gandolfo, and all the pilgrims and all the visitors, who rightly love this place, are enchanted by its beauty and enjoy a moment of relaxation here.... However, I have also come to express to you who work in these Pontifical Villas my gratitude for your invaluable work and, together with you, I greet and thank your families, who in a certain way share in your service to the Holy See. May the Lord always help you, may he help your work and your family life; may he fill you with his grace and accompany you with his fatherly love.

The presence of Bishop Marcello Semeraro of Albano gives me the opportunity to convey an affectionate thought to the parish community of Castel Gandolfo; and also to the local religious communities. I am thinking of the entire Diocese of Albano, and I urge it to renew its commitment to proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel with joy and enthusiasm.

I address my sincere gratitude to you, Ms Milvia Monachesi, Mayor of this town, and to the entire municipal administration for its work on behalf of this community. Please convey my cordial greeting and assurance to all the inhabitants of my remembrance in prayer. I encourage them to be a sign of hope and peace, ever attentive to the people and families who are experiencing the

greatest difficulty. This is important! We must always be a sign of hope and peace at this moment. Open the doors to hope, so that hope may make progress, always be peacemakers!

At this moment my thoughts turn to Blessed [John Paul II](#) and to [Benedict XVI](#), who enjoyed spending part of the summer period in this papal residence. Many of you have been able to meet and welcome them, and treasure loving memories of them. May the witness they bore always be an encouragement to you in your daily faithfulness to Christ and your continuous effort to lead a life consistent with the demands of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church.

Dear brothers and sisters, I entrust you to the motherly protection of the Virgin Mary — whom we shall honour the day after tomorrow as Our Lady of Carmel — so that you may perform your various tasks usefully and calmly. May Our Lady always watch over you and over your families! Please pray for me too — I am in need of your prayers — and for my service. I renew to each one of you my gratitude and I bless you warmly. Thank you!