



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE ROME POLICE HEADQUARTERS
AND OF THE CENTRAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT***

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Friday, 25 May 2018*

[Multimedia]

*Mr. Chief of Police,
Distinguished Authorities,
Dear relatives of the Victims of terrorism and of those fallen in the course of duty,
Dear Officials, Agents and Civilian Staff of the State Police!*

I welcome you and thank the Chief of Police for his words. To him and to all of you I wish to reiterate my gratitude towards the State Police for the service it renders to the Pope and to the Church.

When your chaplain asked me for an audience for the Police of the State Police of Rome and the Central Health Directorate of the Department of Public Security along with their families, I immediately accepted. Meeting you, with your children, wives, husbands, parents, gives me joy! Looking into your eyes, shaking hands with you and caressing your children expands hearts, brings us closer and unites us in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Thank you for coming with your families, thank you!

The family is the first community where one teaches and learns to love. And it is the special environment in which one teaches and learns the faith, where one learns to do good. And these things, faith, love, doing good, are learned only “in dialect”, the dialect of the family. In another language they cannot be understood. They are learned in dialect, the dialect of the family. The

good health of the family is decisive for the future of the world and of the Church, considering the many challenges and difficulties that today arise in everyday life. In fact, when we encounter a bitter reality, when we feel the pain, when the experience of evil or violence breaks in, it is in the family, in its communion of life and love that everything can be understood and overcome.

The family itself, like every human reality, is marked by suffering; as attested to in many pages of the Bible: the violence of Cain towards Abel, the quarrels between the sons and the brides of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the tragedies that strike David, the suffering of Tobias, the pain of Job. Even the life of the Holy Family included the experience of painful contradictions, such as the flight of Mary and Joseph who were exiled in Egypt with the little Jesus. Mary meditated on all these experiences in her heart; and Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, in turn sees, hears, suffers and rejoices, experiencing in His heart the vicissitudes of the people He meets: the mother-in-law of Peter who is sick and bed-bound, Martha and Mary who mourn the death of their brother Lazarus, the widow of Naim who lost her only son, the centurion sorely tried by the serious illness of those dear to him ... Jesus is always able to respond to people who beg him for health or cry inconsolably.

Following the example of Jesus, the Church too, in her daily journey, knows the anxieties and the tensions of families, generational conflicts, domestic violence, economic difficulties, the precariousness of work ... Reflected every day in the Gospel, the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit to stay close to families, as a travelling companion, especially for those who are going through crises or who experience suffering of some kind, and also to indicate the final destination, where death and pain will disappear for ever.

On the path of life, Jesus never abandons us. He follows and accompanies all human beings with mercy; and in a particular way families, whom He sanctifies in love. His presence is made manifest through tenderness, caresses, the embrace of a mother, of a father, of a son. The family is the place of tenderness. For this reason in the Scriptures God shows Himself to be a father but also a mother who cares for and stoops down to suckle and feed.

The Church, like a caring mother, teaches us to remain steadfast in God, that God Who loves us and sustains us. Starting from this fundamental inner experiences it is possible to arrive at the point of bearing all the contradictions and vicissitudes of life, the aggressions of the world, our infidelities and defects and those of others. And only starting from this solid inner experience can we be hold in persevering in goodness, which with the grace of God defeats all evil.

Faith too is handed down in the family. Here we learn to pray: humble prayer, simple and at the same time open to hope, accompanied by joy, that which is true, which comes from a profound harmony between people, from the beauty of being together and supporting each other on the path of life, while aware of all our limitations.

The era in which we live is marked by profound changes. You experience it continuously in your work, both in investigation and on the streets, especially in a city like Rome. And family experience helps you in this too, because it gives you human equilibrium, wisdom, values of reference. A good family also transmits civil values, educates in feeling part of the social body, behaving as loyal and honest citizens. A nation cannot remain upright if families do not perform this task. The first civic education is received in the family.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for this visit and I accompany you with my grateful remembrance in prayer. May the Family of Nazareth and Saint Michael the Archangel, your Patron, help all of your families and the great family of the State Police.

**Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 25 May 2018*
