



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO MEMBERS OF THE "TENSHO KENOH SHISETSU KENSHOUKAI" ASSOCIATION (JAPAN)**

*Study of the Paul VI Hall*

*Wednesday, 12 September 2018* [\[Multimedia\]](#)

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*Dear friends from Japan,*

Good morning! I am very happy to meet you and with you Fathers Renzo De Luca and Shinzo Kawamura.

The Pope is very pleased to welcome you, delegates of the Tensho Kenoho Shisetsu Kenshokai Association, to Rome. More than 400 years ago, in 1585, four young Japanese arrived in Rome, accompanied by some Jesuit missionaries, to visit the Pope, who was then [Gregory XIII](#). It was an extraordinary journey, as it was the first time that a group of representatives of your great country came to Europe. The four young people received a wonderful welcome, not only from the Pope, but also from all the cities and courts that they passed through: Lisbon, Madrid, Florence, Rome, Venice, Milan, Genoa ... Europeans met Japanese and Japanese experienced Europe and the heart of the Catholic Church. It was an historic meeting between two great cultures and spiritual traditions, and it is right to preserve the memory, as your Association does.

The journey of your young predecessors lasted more than eight years; there were no planes in those days. Yours is shorter and less tiring. But I hope you feel welcomed by the Pope as they were and that, like them, you will experience the joy of this meeting and be encouraged to return to your country as ambassadors of friendship and promoters of great human and Christian values. The four young people of the Tensho era did exactly this, showing commitment and courage. In particular, I want to remember their leader Mancio Ito, who became a priest, and Julian Nakaura who, like many others, was executed on the famous hill of the martyrs of Nagasaki and was proclaimed blessed.

I know that your Association promotes fine projects of culture and solidarity. I especially

encourage your current efforts to set up a fund for the training of young people and orphans, thanks to the contribution of companies that are sensitive to their problems. You wish to show that religion, culture and the economy can work together peacefully to create a more humane world marked by an integral ecology. This is fully in accordance with what I also wish for our human family today and tomorrow, as I wrote in my Encyclical Letter *Laudato si*. It is the right path for the future of our common home.

Thank you once again for your visit. Like your four young predecessors, convey to your beloved people and your great country the friendship of the Pope of Rome and the esteem of the whole Catholic Church.

Availing myself of this occasion, I would like to communicate my intention to visit Japan next year. I hope to be able to fulfil this wish.

*[The following are Pope's off-the-cuff words]*

Estoy muy contento de lo que Ustedes me han dicho y de esta historia que conocía de lejos. Las amistades se hacen a lo largo de la historia. Por eso es importante la memoria. No olviden las cosas que nos dieron la cultura, el país, la lengua, la religión, la pertenencia social. No olviden eso y dar un paso adelante. El Provincial lo sabe porque fue director de un museo, así que conoce bien. Hay que cultiv