



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO MEMBERS OF THE "ARCHICOFRADÍA DE LA VIRGEN DE LA CINTA" FROM TORTOSA
(SPAIN)**

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 12 April 2019*

[Multimedia]

Dear confreres and devotees of the *Virgen de la Cinta*:

I am pleased to receive you here for the fourth centenary of the founding of this association of consecrated faithful devoted to our Mother. I greet Msgr. Enrique Benavent, bishop of Tortosa, and Ms. Meritzell Roigé, mayor of the city, who accompanies you on this pilgrimage.

The Confraternity of *Nuestra Señora de la Cinta* has been linked to Peter's Successor ever since its inception. A few months after the constitution of the fraternity, approved by the bishop of this city, Luis de Tena, they wanted it to be confirmed by Pope Paul V. And now, with this pilgrimage to the tomb of Peter, you wish to renew that bond of communion.

This gesture of adhesion is not something from the past that inspires only a mere historical interest, but rather it keeps its relevance alive. You call yourselves brothers, confreres, and in that way you reveal the fundamental reality of your lives, that you are all sons of God. Etymologically, brotherhood means a "union of brothers". But it is not enough to say that you are brothers – you must always remember that "foundational" unity that marks you as such. Brothers – as we know – often quarrel, they fight over so many things, but even when that happens, they know how to keep alive that search for good that can not exclude peace and harmony between them. The bond of charity that as brothers unites you with your bishop and, through him, with the Pope, constitutes an important gift that enriches you but also entails a mission: to be a leaven of solidarity in society.

Looking to the example of Mary, you are called to take that fraternity to every corner of our society.

You are present in different ecclesial realities in your diocese: in this way you collaborate so that the Church is first of all a home, a family, a place of welcome and love, in which everyone, especially the poor and marginalized, can feel a part, and never feel that they are excluded or rejected. Lived in this way, fraternity becomes a mission, which challenges us and does not leave us indifferent, because the mutual love that reaches out and is directed towards others is our letter of presentation. Thus, even those who do not believe can repeat that eulogy of Tertullian: "See how they love one another!" (*Apologeticum*, 39: PL I, 471).

To live in this way, as united brothers, requires effort and sacrifice, but it is worth it, as it offers a sign to a society that is so divided. I encourage you in your task so that you may be a sign to the world of this fraternity that comes from God.

May the Lord bless you and keep you always, and may the Holy Virgin care for you and accompany you in your labours.

And please, do not forget to pray for me.

Many thanks.

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