



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE VATICAN EMPLOYEES

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Thursday, 22 December 2022*

[Multimedia]

Thank you for coming to this appointment in which we exchange our Christmas greetings.

First of all, we have to *thank* the Lord because, with his help, we have overcome the critical phase of the pandemic. Let us not forget! When we were in lockdown, we would say: I wonder what it will be like when we are free to move about, to meet one another and so on. Then, as soon as things change, we lose our memory and go on as if nothing had happened. And perhaps we do not even thank the Lord! This is not Christian and it is not even human. No, we want to give thanks because we were able to resume working and even tried to overcome certain more or less big problems that had arisen in the most difficult period. To resume is a task we all have to do.

We must not forget, because the long period of the pandemic has left its mark. Not just material, economic consequences. It has also left its mark on the lives of people, in relationships, in the serenity of families. And this is why today I wish you, above all, *serenity* : serenity for each of you and for your families. Serenity does not mean that everything is going well, that there are no problems, difficulties. No, this is not what it means. The Holy Family of Jesus, Joseph and Mary shows us this. We can imagine when they reached Bethlehem, Our Lady was beginning to feel some pain, Joseph did not know where to go, he knocked on many doors, but there was no room.... And yet in the hearts of Mary and Joseph, there was a serenity at the base that came from God, and it came from the awareness of being in his will, of seeking it together, in prayer and reciprocal love. I wish you this: that each of you have faith in God and that in every family there be the simplicity to trust in his help, to pray to him and to thank him.

I would like to wish serenity in particular to your children, the girls and boys, because they were deeply affected by the lockdown and have accumulated much tension. It is normal, it is inevitable. However, we should not act as if nothing has happened. We should reflect, try to understand, because emerging from a crisis better [than before] does not occur by magic. We have to work on ourselves, with calm, with patience. The kids can do this too, naturally with the help of their parents and sometimes of other people, but it is important that they themselves understand that crises are part of growing up and require working on oneself.

This is the first wish that comes to mind, starting with the pandemic. I wish you serenity, in your heart, in your family relationships, at work. Serenity.

And this is the second one: that we be *witnesses and artisans of peace*. At this time in world history, we are called to feel more strongly the responsibility we each have to do our part in building peace. And this has a special meaning for us who live and work in Vatican City. Not because this tiny State, the smallest in the world, has a special, specific bearing, not for this reason, but because we have as Head and Master the Lord Jesus, who calls us to unite our humble daily commitment to his work of reconciliation and peace. Starting with the environment in which we live, the relationships with our colleagues, how we face misunderstandings and conflicts that can arise at work; or at home in the family environment; or even with friends or in parishes. That is where we can be concrete witnesses and artisans of peace.

Sowing peace. How? For example, by avoiding speaking ill of others “behind their back”. If we did this alone, we would be peacemakers everywhere! If there is something wrong, let’s talk about it directly with the interested party, with respect, frankly. Let us be brave. Let us not pretend that nothing is wrong and then speak badly about him or her to other people. Let us try to be sincere and honest. Let’s try this and we will see that it will go well.

Dear sisters and dear brothers, I offer my best wishes to you and to your loved ones. Greet your children and your elderly at home, on my behalf. They are the treasures in the family, the treasure of society. And I thank you. I thank you for all that you do here, for your work and also for your patience. Sometimes, because I know that there are situations in which you exercise patience: thank you for this. We all have to move forward with patience, with joy, thanking the Lord who gives us this grace of work, but also protecting our work and carrying it out with dignity. Thank you for this, thank you for what you do here. Without you, all this would not go on. Thank you very much!

I offer my heartfelt blessings to all of you and I ask you please to pray for me. And Happy Christmas to all of you!

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