



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO
ALLA FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA RICETRASMISSIONI***

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 26 March 2022*

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Dear friends, good morning and welcome!

I thank the president for his introductory words, which recalled the history of your association in Italy: thank you. You too are part of the vast and multiform movement of Italian volunteerism, which I never cease to appreciate and which deserves to be encouraged and supported. That has been one of my surprises here in Italy: a strong voluntary sector. Your Federation, in particular, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year: congratulations!

You put your passion of radio amateurs at the service of society. You have turned it into an effective instrument of civil protection and solidarity with the most needy and fragile people and with the most vulnerable social groups. This is very beautiful: a personal passion that becomes social service. It is the principle of gifts, of talents, put to good use for the common good.

One of your characteristics is the rapidity of intervention, thanks to the radio itself, which overcomes barriers, but also thanks to your network. In fact, it is not an individual action: your strength lies precisely in your widespread presence throughout the territory and in the possibility of circulating news and information everywhere very quickly. And another essential aspect is freedom, independence. Think about how this can become decisive, where a regime or another power center wish to control communications. It is essential to maintain freedom, to be truly at the service of people, of the common good.

I have heard that you are committing yourselves also to the service of the many brothers and sisters who have fled Ukraine because of the war. I thank you for this. We hope and pray that this war – which is shameful for all of us, for all of humanity - will come to an end as soon as possible. It is unacceptable; every day that it continues, adds more death and destruction. Many people have mobilized to help the refugees. Ordinary people, especially in neighboring countries, but also here in Italy, where thousands of Ukrainians have arrived and continue to arrive. Your contribution is valuable: it is a practical, artisanal way of building peace. And I agree with what the president said, talking about European Civil Protection: Europe is providing a response to this war, not only at the level of high institutions, but also at the level of civil society, of voluntary associations like yours. This way of reacting is fundamental and indispensable, since it regenerates the human and social fabric, in the presence of a wound so serious and so great as that caused by the war. We must help the Ukrainian refugees, not only at this moment, but later, when the memory of the war fades away, because at that time they will have more difficulties than now: because now we are all together, and then ... We must think about the future, and it is not easy.

Dear friends, I thank you for your visit. I wish you all the best in your activities. Always keep freedom and solidarity together. And aim for the common good, never at partisan interests. Only one preference: the poor, the defenceless, the marginalized: they must be first in line. I bless all of you and your families. And please, I ask you to pray for me. Thank you!

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