



The Holy See

***GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO A GROUP OF WOMEN WITH DON LUIGI CIOTTI***

Consistory Hall

Monday, 30 October 2023

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters!

I thank Don Luigi Ciotti, who is accompanying you, and I greet you, dear ladies, every one of you. Thank you for coming. And I greet all the others.

You know that among Jesus' disciples, there were also some women. Those women – like the rest of the men – were not perfect people, they were not “angelic”: they were women tried by life, sometimes “contaminated” by evil. They were women whom Jesus welcomed with compassion, with tenderness, and he healed them. Think of Mary Magdalene, for example. With Him, they walked the path of liberation. And they did so precisely by walking with Him and with the other disciples. This is how it is: one becomes free not by magic, but by walking with the Lord – this gives us freedom! – sharing His steps, His path, which necessarily traverses the cross and leads to resurrection.

You, dear ladies, were born and raised in contexts polluted by mafia criminality, and you decided to leave it behind. I bless this choice of yours, and I encourage you to keep going.

I imagine there have been moments of fear, of confusion, it is normal... In these moments, think of the Lord Jesus who walks by your side. You are not alone; continue to fight. I advise you always to keep with you a small copy of the Gospel. Read a passage every day, calmly, and image you are with Him, with the Lord, in the midst of the disciples. And in reality, it is just like that: He walks with us every day on the path of life. His cross gives meaning to our crosses, and His resurrection is a

source of hope.

It is important to carry that little Gospel with you and read a passage every day; it will be good for you. Then, we will see what we can do to let you have the Gospel: I will send it via Don Ciotti. Let me know how many of you there are and he will give one to each of you. But carry it in your pocket, in your bag, always, and read a passage each day. This will be a good thing, very important.

Thank you once again for your visit. I accompany you with prayer for you and your loved ones, especially your children. May the Lord bless you and Our Lady keep you. And now let us pray together, and I will give you the blessing.

L'Osservatore Romano, 30 October 2023