



# The Holy See

---

## **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO THE ALTAR SERVERS FROM FRANCE**

*Clementine Hall  
Monday, 25 August 2025*

**[Multimedia]**

---

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you! Dear altar servers from all over France, good morning!

I welcome you to Rome, and I am very pleased to meet you, with all your accompaniers – laypeople, priests and bishops – whom I warmly greet.

You know that this is a particular year: it is a “Holy Year”, which takes place only once every 25 years, during which the Lord Jesus offers us a special opportunity. When we come to Rome and cross the Holy Door, he helps us to “convert”, or rather to turn towards him, to grow in faith and in his love, to become better disciples, so that our lives may be beautiful and good under his gaze, in view of eternal life. It is therefore a great gift from heaven that you are here this year! I invite you to welcome it by living intensely the activities that are proposed to you, but above all by taking the time to talk to Jesus, in the secrecy of your heart, and to love him more and more. His only desire is to be part of your life in order to illuminate it from within, to become your best friend, the most faithful one. Life becomes beautiful and happy with Jesus. However, he awaits your answer. He knocks on the door and waits to enter: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). To be “close” to Jesus, him, the Son of God, to enter into friendship with him! What an unexpected destiny! What joy! What consolation! What hope for the future!

Hope is precisely the theme of this Holy Year. Perhaps you sense how much we need hope. You

certainly feel that the world is in a bad way, that it must face increasingly serious and ominous challenges. Perhaps you, or those around you, have been affected by suffering, illness or disability, by failure, by the loss of a loved one; and, in the face of hardship, your heart feels sadness and anguish. Who will come to our aid? Who will have pity on us? Who will come to save us? Not only from our sufferings, from our limits and our mistakes, but even from death itself?

The answer is perfectly clear, and resounds in the History of 2000 years: only Jesus comes to save us, no-one else: because only he has the power to do so – He is God Almighty in person – and because he loves us. Saint Peter said it emphatically: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (*Acts* 4:12). Never forget these words, dear friends: imprint them on your heart, and place Jesus at the centre of your lives. I hope that you will depart from Rome closer to him, more determined than ever to love and follow him, and thus better equipped with hope to face the life that lies ahead of you. In difficult moments of doubt, discouragement and turmoil, this hope will always be like a secure anchor cast towards heaven (cf. *Heb* 6:19), enabling you to continue on your journey.

There is sure proof that Jesus loves us and saves us. He gave his life for us, offering it on the cross. Indeed, there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for those one loves (cf. *Jn* 15:13). This is the most wonderful thing about our Catholic faith, something that no one could have imagined or hoped for: God, the creator of heaven and earth, wanted to suffer and die for us creatures. God loved us to the point of dying for us! To do so, he descended from heaven, he humiliated himself and made himself similar to men, and he offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, the most important event in the history of the world. What should we fear from a God who loved us up to this point? What more could we hope for? What are we waiting for to repay him as he deserves? Gloriously risen, Jesus is alive with the Father, now caring for us and communicating his everlasting life to us.

And the Church, from generation to generation, carefully conserves the memory of the death and resurrection of the Lord of whom she is witness, as her most precious treasure. She preserves and transmits it by celebrating the Eucharist, which you have the joy and honour of serving. The Eucharist is the treasure of the Church, the treasure of treasures. Ever since the very first day of her existence, and then throughout the centuries, the Church has celebrated Mass, Sunday after Sunday, to remember what the Lord has done for her. In the hands of the priest, and in his words “This is my Body, this is my Blood”, Jesus once again gives his life on the altar, he once again sheds his blood for us. Dear altar servers, the celebration of Mass saves us today! It saves the world today! It is the most important event in the life of the Christian and in the life of the Church, because it is the encounter in which God gives himself to us for love, again and again. Christians do not go to Mass out of duty, but because they absolutely need to; the need for the life of God who gives himself without asking for anything in return!

Dear friends, I thank you for your commitment: it is a very great and generous service that you

give to your parish, and I encourage you to persevere faithfully. When you approach the altar, always keep in mind the greatness and the holiness of what is celebrated. The Mass is a moment of celebration and of joy. Indeed, how can one fail to feel joy in the presence of Jesus? But the Mass is, at the same time, something serious, solemn, imbued with gravity. May your attitude, your silence, the dignity of your service, the beauty of the liturgy, and the order and majesty of your gestures introduce the faithful to the sacred greatness of the Mystery.

I also hope that you are attentive to the call that Jesus may address to you to follow him more closely in the priesthood. I appeal to your consciences as young, enthusiastic and generous people, and I will tell you something that you must listen to, even if it may disturb you a little: the lack of priests in France, in the world, is a great misfortune! A misfortune for the Church! May you, little by little, Sunday after Sunday, discover the beauty, the happiness and the necessity of such a vocation. What a wonderful life is that of the priest who, at the centre of each day, encounters Jesus in such an exceptional way and gives him to the world!

Dear altar servers, I thank you again for your visit. Your numbers and the faith that animates you are a great consolation, a sign of hope. Persevere courageously, and bear witness around you to the pride and joy that serving at Mass gives you.

I cordially impart the Apostolic Blessing to you, as well as to your companions, your priests and your families. Thank you!

---

*Holy See Press Office Bulletin*, 25 August 2025