



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO A DELEGATION OF FRENCH POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 28 August 2025*

[Multimedia]

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you!

[In English] I'm sure many of you speak English, no? I am going to attempt to speak French, counting on your benevolence!

I warmly greet His Excellency Bishop Dominique Blanchet, and I welcome you all, elected and civil leaders of the diocese of Créteil, on your pilgrimage to Rome.

I am pleased to welcome you in your journey of faith: you will return to your daily commitments strengthened in hope, more resolute in working towards building a more just, more humane, more fraternal world, which can only be a world more imbued with the Gospel. Faced with the drifts of all kinds that our Western societies are experiencing, we can do no better, as Christians, than to turn to Christ and ask for his help in exercising our responsibilities.

For this reason, your journey, more than mere personal enrichment, is of great importance and great usefulness for the men and women you serve. It is far more praiseworthy insofar as it is not easy in France, for an elected official, due to a sometimes-misunderstood *laïcité*, to act and decide in accordance with one's faith in the exercise of public responsibility.

The salvation Jesus obtained with his death and resurrection encompasses all the dimensions of

human life, such as culture, economics and work, the family and marriage, respect for human dignity and life, health, communication, education and politics. Christianity cannot be reduced to a simple private devotion, because it implies a way of living in society imprinted by love for God and for one's neighbour who, in Christ, is no longer an enemy but a brother.

Your region, the place of your commitments, has to face major social issues such as violence in some areas, insecurity, precariousness, drug networks, unemployment, and the disappearance of community. In order to do so, Christian leaders are strengthened by the virtue of charity, which dwells within them ever since their baptism. This latter is a gift from God, a "force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today's world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organizations, legal systems from within. In this perspective love takes on the characteristic style of social and political charity. Social charity makes us love the common good, it makes us effectively seek the good of all people" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 207). This is why Christian leaders are better prepared to face the challenges of the contemporary world, naturally to the extent to which they live and bear witness to the faith that works in them, their personal relationship with Christ that enlightens them and gives them this strength. Jesus affirms this emphatically: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (*Jn* 15:5). It should therefore come as no surprise that the promotion of "values" — however evangelical they may be — but "emptied" of Christ, who is their author, is incapable of changing the world.

So, Bishop Blanchet asked me for some advice to give you. The first – and only – that I would give you is to unite yourselves ever more closely to Jesus, to live him and to bear witness to him. There is no separation in the personality of a public figure: there is not the politician on one side, and the Christian on the other. Rather, there is the politician who, under the gaze of God and his conscience, lives his commitments and responsibilities in a Christian manner!

You are therefore called to strengthen your faith, to deepen your understanding of doctrine – in particular the social doctrine – that Jesus taught the world, and to put it into practice in the exercise of your functions and the drafting of laws. Its foundations are essentially in harmony with human nature, the natural law that everyone can recognize, even non-Christians, even non-believers. There is therefore nothing to fear in proposing it and defending it with conviction: it is a doctrine of salvation that aims at the good of every human being, at the building of peaceful, harmonious, prosperous and reconciled societies.

I am well aware that the openly Christian commitment of a public official is not easy, particularly in certain Western societies where Christ and his Church are marginalized, often ignored, and sometimes ridiculed. Neither do I ignore the pressure, the party directives, the "ideological colonizations", to use an apt expression of Pope Francis, to which politicians are subjected. They must have the courage to say at times, "no, I cannot!", when the truth is at stake. Here too, only union with Jesus – the crucified Jesus! – will give you this courage to suffer in his name. As he said to his disciples, "in the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the

world” (Jn 16:33).

Dear friends, I thank you for your visit and I assure you of my most sincere encouragement for the continuation of your activities in the service of your fellow citizens. Preserve your hope for a better world; keep the certainty that, united with Christ, your efforts will bear fruit and be rewarded. I entrust you and your country to the protection of Our Lady of the Assumption, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you.

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 28 August 2025

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