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Audience with a Delegation from Villanova University, Philadelphia

At 12.10 today, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation from Villanova University, Philadelphia, United States of America.

The following is the Pope's address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you, Father President, the Council and the Board of Trustees of Villanova University, on the occasion of your meeting in Rome. I pray that your time in the Eternal City will be a source of spiritual renewal for each of you.

As an heir to the great Augustinian tradition of learning inspired by the pursuit of divine wisdom, your University was founded to preserve and pass on the richness of the Catholic tradition to new generations of students, who, like the young Augustine, seek true meaning and value in true life. In fidelity to this vision, the University, as a community of research and study, must also address the complex ethical and cultural challenges raised by the epochal changes affecting our world today. It is my hope that in every aspect of its life and mission, Villanova University will persevere in its efforts to communicate the intellectual, spiritual and moral values that will enable young people to participate wisely and responsibly in the great debates shaping the future of society.

One urgent aspect of this educational task is the development of a universal, "catholic" vision of the unity of our human family and a commitment to the practical solidarity needed to combat the grave inequalities and injustices that mark today's world. Universities, by their very nature, are called to be workshops of dialogue and encounter in the service of truth, justice and the defense of human dignity at every level. This is especially true of Catholic institutions like your own, which contribute to the Church's mission of promoting the authentic and integral growth of the human family towards its definitive fullness in God (cf. Ap. Const. *Veritatis Gaudium*, 1).

No one knew better than Saint Augustine the restlessness of the human heart until it finds its rest in the God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals to us the deepest truth about our lives and our ultimate destiny. May these days of reflection, discussion and encounter confirm you in your commitment to the University's mission in the service of the truth that makes us free (cf. *Jn* 8:32). With affection I commend you and your families, and the entire Villanova community, to the prayers of Saints Augustine and Monica, and to all I impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Risen Lord Jesus.
