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Audience with teachers and students of the Collegio Rotondi of Gorla Minore, Varese

This morning, in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the teachers and students of the *Collegio Rotondi* of Gorla Minore, Varese.

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

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I welcome you all, young people, parents and teachers of the *Collegio Rotondi* of Gorla. I greet in particular your Rector, don Andrea Cattaneo. You are celebrating the 425th anniversary of the founding of your school, born in distant 1599: more than four centuries of history, and it seems to me that you carry them well!

It is a pleasure to see you here. Especially you, young people, who with your young faces full of life, with the dreams, plans and desires you carry in your heart give meaning and value to such an ancient heritage. With your presence, you bear witness of how the *Collegio Rotondi*, faithful to its educational tradition, has grown over time, changing and adapting many times in the face of the needs of various historical moments: from the origins, with the donation of Canon Giovanni Terzaghi, to the transformations which took place under the Austrian and Savoy governments, this latter the work of the Rector Rotondi – from whom you take your current name – to the travails of the two world wars, the challenges of the post-war period, up to being today the largest “paritarian” school in Italy. And all this contains an important message, which I invite you to reflect upon: it is necessary to *know how to change so as to remain faithful* to your own identity and mission.

I therefore encourage you to engage intensively in your school activities, but always with a mind open to newness. In particular, you, young people, seek the truth in everything, without letting yourselves be conditioned by the fashions of the moment or by common thinking, by the *likes* or consensus of *followers*. These are not the most important things; on the contrary, depending on them too much can take away our freedom. At the same

time, though, do not be afraid, when necessary, to change and accept opinions and ways of thinking different to your own in all that which is not essential: be true lovers of the truth, and for this, always open to listening and confrontation.

Jesus taught us that the truth sets us free (cf. *Jn* 8:32), and He said it to people who struggled to accept His new way of reading the Scriptures, because in reality they did not know them well enough (cf. *Mk* 12: 24-27), and were afraid of changing their own patterns. Do you see? Ignorance breeds fear, and fear breeds intolerance. You do not do this. You study as a “team”, together, always joyfully! Indeed, knowledge grows in sharing with others. One studies in order to grow, and growing means to mature together, to engage in dialogue: to converse with God, with teachers and other educators, with parents; to converse between yourselves and also with those who think differently, always to learn new things and to enable everyone to give the best of themselves. After all, this is what the motto of your school says: “*Erudire et edocere*”, that is, provide to everyone the tools necessary to interpret reality and to express themselves with creative freedom.

Dear friends, thank you for coming, and thank you for your commitment to your educational community. Continue in this way, preserving and updating the legacy you have received. I bless you all from the bottom of my heart. And please do not forget to pray for me! Thank you!
