



Pope records message for blind and visually impaired

Vatican City, 11 June 2013 (VIS) – This morning the Holy Father sent the following audio message to the Italian Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Unione Italiana Ciechi e Ipovedenti) on the occasion of their summer program for around 75, mostly elderly, persons at their Le Torri Centre in Tirrenia, Italy, specializing in rehabilitation studies and vacations.

“I know that ... some of you wanted to come to Rome,” the Pope said. “Thanks to modern technology, I can come to you! Thank you for your appreciation, for your affection, and especially for your prayers.”

“The Gospels tell us that Jesus had a particular care for the blind. Besides other sick persons, He healed many blind persons. But the healing of a visually impaired person has special symbolic meaning: it represents the gift of faith. It is a sign that concerns us all because we all need the light of faith to walk along the path of life. This is why Baptism, which is the first Sacrament of Faith, was also called 'illumination' in antiquity.”

“I ask the Lord to renew the gift of faith in each of you, so that your spirits may always have God's light, the light of love that makes sense of our lives, illuminates it, gives us hope, and makes us good and available to our brothers and sisters.”

“I also wish the best for your association. ... Always spread a culture of encounter, solidarity, and hospitality towards persons with disabilities, not just asking for the proper social services but also encouraging their active participation in society.”

“I entrust you all to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother. I ask you to pray for me and for my service to the Church and I wholeheartedly bless you, together with your loved ones.”