

Pope to Italian scouts: ‘We must defend the dignity of all human life’.

By Lisa Zengarini: 13 April 2024

Pope Francis on Saturday called upon the Italian Catholic Movement of Adult Scouts (MASCI) celebrating the 70th anniversary of its foundation to continue to be a caring community, serving the dignity of all human life and protecting our common home. “Persevere on your path”, he said, as he met in the Vatican with some 150 board members of the movement founded in 1954.

“More life to life”: Addressing them in the Clementine Hall, Pope Francis commended the theme chosen for the anniversary celebration, “More life to life”, which, he said, epitomizes the spirit that inspired three important projects the Italian Scout movement plans to carry out this year.

Love for life is universal: A cot instead, Pope Francis said, symbolizes the joy of a child being born into the world, speaks to us about family life “a welcoming and safe nest for the little ones, and of care for life “at every stage.” The Pope remarked, “It further underlines that love for life is always open and universal, that it desires the good of all, regardless of origin or any other condition.”

Building instruments of good not of death: Carpentry, Pope Francis noted, has a particularly symbolic meaning for Christians, as it immediately brings to mind Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth “working humbly ‘with human hands.’” “In a world where there is so much talk about producing weapons to wage war,” the Pope said, “this reminds us of man’s fundamental vocation to transform God’s gifts not into instruments of death, but into instruments of good”, to build a just and peaceful society, “where everyone is given the possibility of a dignified life.”

Listening to the cry of the Earth and the poor: Regarding the planting of a new forest, Pope Francis stressed, not only has it always been an important feature of scouting but is also a fundamental value we need to uphold today as we face the dramatic consequences “of an irresponsible and short-sighted exploitation of the planet”, of lifestyles and selfish behaviours that are, “insensitive” to the cry of the Earth, “as well as to the voice of many brothers and sisters unjustly marginalized and excluded from a fair distribution of goods.”

Continue to be an open and caring community: Bringing his address to a close, Pope Francis, therefore, encouraged the Italian scouts to continue to be an open, attentive, and welcoming community “prophetic in courageously announcing the Gospel” and eager to meet others, “especially those who live in the existential peripheries of our time.”

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-04/pope-to-italian-scouts-we-must-defend-the-dignity-of-human-life.html>