

ADDRESS TO HOLY FATHER, POPE FRANCIS.
BY EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF JESUIT ALUMNI PRESIDENT, MR. ENRIQUE REBES
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRIVATE PAPAL AUDIENCE HELD AS PART OF THE
EUROPEAN ENCOUNTER OF JESUIT ALUMNI
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Saturday, July 17th, 2016

Dear Holy Father,

We are extremely grateful for this meeting with His Holiness. For us it is a reward after many years of volunteering as alumni of the Society founded by Saint Ignatius, walking by his side, trying to do our bit for a better world: as Saint Teresa of Calcutta put it: "Give always the best and the best will happen. "



Above all we want to thank His Holiness for his dedication and for his invaluable work as head of the Church and to the benefit of the rest of humanity. For his bravery. Thank you for his apostolic task: for what his actions, his words, his gestures, his example teach us. His Holiness is a reason for hope in the future.

We just walked in austerity a part of the way of St. Francis of Assisi. Later, we attended the European Encounters in which we have approached the refugees, trying to contribute to help in their dramatic and desperate situation. Thousands of people have lost their lives to escape their country, having become a nightmare. Many of them are children. And thousands of families wait in refugee camps at the gates of Europe.

At the other extreme, we are aware of occupying a unique position: that of European citizens educated in Jesuit schools.

Therefore, we cannot allow such suffering and we are called to collaborate to alleviate it, following the mission of the Society of dealing with people who are at the "border" in the most difficult and complicated situations. As does the Jesuit Refugee Service.

The European Confederation and the World Union of Jesuit alumni are committed to this mission on behalf of refugees and suffering people. And in this, we will go forward. We have organized these meetings and have agreed to promote among alumni the activities of the Jesuit Refugee Service. As a next step, we would like to get involved in the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in each country,



and get support from different centers of social studies and cooperation of the Society as a source of ongoing formation of alumni. We have the very tools at our disposal.



We are also realists and we note the importance of the political dimension of the problems faced by refugees. And we witness the high degree of demagogy and populism with which this issue is addressed. That is also why we see the need for alumni to be involved in this debate and in the political decision-making in order for this issue to receive the treatment it

deserves in Europe today: humanitarian assistance on arrival, integration in the hosting countries and, above all, preventing situations that force to leave the country.



In the words of San Francisco, "start doing what is necessary, then what is possible and suddenly you will be doing the impossible."

Thanks to His Holiness and to the Society for showing us this path of solidarity and humanity.

En todo amar y servir.