

Good morning, dear young friends.

This is the first time our annual congress has been held outside of Assisi, the city of Saint Francis, and without Pope Francis, the Pope who founded our movement.

As President of the Foundation established to support you, I am delighted, along with the other founders and members of the board of directors, to greet you. I would also like to bring the spirit of Assisi to you, to a place so close to Rome and the Pope.

You remember the congresses held in Assisi, at the very source and heart of Franciscan spirituality. From this great Saint - Francis - who stripped himself of all earthly goods to live his choice for God and to share the lives of the poor, we receive the fundamental guidelines for a sound economic paradigm.

At the same time, from the Pope who took his name, we have received many insights into an economy worthy of this word. Economy means to take care of the "oikos," of the home. Economy means "home," and, therefore, the human person in his or her original relationship with the family. Economy is to care for our personal home and our common home. In his Cantic of Brother Sun, Francis of Assisi teaches us that everything is connected by the same origin in the Creator, and, therefore, in some way, all things are brothers and sisters.

By providing us with these insights, Pope Francis has entrusted us with the legacy of the Church's entire social doctrine.

We especially remember what he told our delegation visiting him a year ago. In a certain sense, it was his testament to us. Pope Francis told us: be witnesses, do not be afraid, hope without growing tired.

Now we entrust the journey to our new Pope, Leo XIV, who took this name to be in continuity with Leo XIII, the Pope of *Rerum Novarum*, the great encyclical that pioneered the Church's new systematic doctrine.

We are on the good road!

Please receive, each and every one of you, my big hug, the embrace of Assisi, and God's blessing.