

Text of Pope's Words to Various Groups at Roman Parish of St. Joseph all'Aurelio

THE HOLY FATHER'S WORDS IN THE COURSE OF MEETINGS WITH DIFFERENT PARISH GROUPS (From Zenit.org, Vatican City, December 15 2014)

MEETING WITH CHILDREN

Good evening! Thank you for your very warm welcome! Thank you so much.

What team do you root for? A bit of everything, a bit of everything ... There are those of you here who are going to make their First Communion. Do you know? This year was the 70th anniversary of my First Communion: 70 years ago I made my First Communion. A long time ago, no? I made it on October 8, 1944 – were some of you born at that time?

But I remember it as if it were today. I was prepared, for a year, by a very good Sister, who was called Dolores. She was so good. She taught me the catechism ... And also the catechists, both were called Alice. They taught us. Then the day arrived. At that time, you couldn't even have a drop of water before Mass, nothing, not even a drop of water. It was Pius XII who saved us from this dictatorship! He was good ... And we all entered the church with our hands stuck together, like this ... and we sang, a song that perhaps you know: O holy altar, guarded by the Angels, I come to you for the first time ..." Is this song sung? It's not sung. We sang this song. But I shall never forget that day.

And then, in the afternoon, we returned to the church for Confirmation – the same day. And Confirmation was done with all the children in a circle, in the church – they had removed the benches – and the Bishop passed by and gave us Confirmation. I don't forget that day. You, who will make your First Communion, always remember that day your whole life: the first day that Jesus came in to us. He comes, makes himself one with us, makes himself our food, our nourishment to give us strength. And, also, don't forget the catechists. Know that I have never forgotten them in my life; and when the Sister who prepared me died, on October 17 of the year '87, I went there and was there with her corpse and I prayed so much, because that Sister brought me close to Jesus. Don't forget the catechists, all right? Don't forget the date, ok? And every year, on the date, go make a good Confession and Communion: all right? OK, thank you. Now I bless all the baby Jesus figurines, all. Lift up the babies, all of them! Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank you. And please, pray for me!

MEETING WITH RECENTLY BAPTIZED CHILDREN

...Our hopes are in the little boy, in the little girl. We give them a seed of faith, of life and they will take it forward to their children, to their grandchildren ... and life is like that. And, in Baptism, you gave the faith, you transmitted the faith through the Sacrament, but after many years, they will do the same with their children, and thus the faith – from the time of Jesus to today -- is like a chain that is transmitted by parents. And this is a beautiful responsibility! Don't forget the day of your Baptism, don't ever forget it!