



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS WITH AN ASSOCIATION OF THE MUNICIPAL LEADERS OF ITALY

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 5 April 2014*

I thank the Mayor of Turin for his words on behalf of all of you. I thank him for having mentioned Cardinal Pellegrino, to whom I am very grateful: after the war it was he who helped my family find work. This gesture of his is a beautiful one. To remember such men of the Church, these men and women of the Church — pastors, sisters, lay people — who knew how to walk with their people, among the people and with the people. And a mayor's identity is a little like this! You began your address saying: "This person turns to the mayor, these people turn to the mayor...". With everyone who turns to the mayor, poor mayor, he ends up weighed down by so many things... Yes, this is a mayor's job and, I would say, your spirituality. I am thinking of him at the end of the day, and I would like to speak to you about the exhaustion of a mayor, when after a long day he or she comes home with so many issues still unresolved. Some yes, but many no.

The mayor among the people. One cannot understand a mayor who isn't found there, because he is a mediator, a mediator amid the needs of the people. And the danger is to become a mayor who is not a mediator but an 'intermediary'?. What is the difference? An intermediary exploits the needs of the parties involved and takes a piece for himself, like the owner of a small shop and one of his suppliers, and he takes a little here and a little there; such a mayor, if he exists — I am speaking hypothetically — this sort of mayor does not know what it means to be a mayor. Instead, a mediator is one who himself pays with his life for the unity of his people, for the well-being of his people, to carry forward the various solutions to the needs of his people. After time dedicated to being a mayor, this man or woman becomes tired, tired, with a desire to rest a little, but also with a heart full of love because he or she has acted as a mediator. And this is my wish for you: that you be mediators. Among the people, creating unity, making peace, resolving problems and solving the needs of your people.

I think of Jesus: he wasn't a mayor, but perhaps the image is useful. I think of Jesus at a moment in his life, when he was in the midst of the crowd: the crowd was pushing on him to the point — the Gospel says — that he could not breathe. This is how it must be for a mayor, with his people, with him, with her, because this means that the people, as with Jesus, look to him or her because he or she can respond. This is my hope for you. Tiredness, in the midst of your people, and that the people look to you because they know that you always respond well.

Thank you for what you do, and pray for me!