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CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY AND THE SALVATION ARMY

ADDRESS TO THE POPE GENERAL BRIAN PEDDLE THE SALVATION ARMY

Friday, 8 November 2019

Your Holiness,

It is an honour to meet with you. I express appreciation for your leadership of a significant community of faith around the world. I thank God for you and assure you of my prayer support as you lead during what I would consider challenging days.

The Salvation Army serves in 131 countries of the world and in many places, we stand alongside the Roman Catholic Church and often, we benefit from the strength and positioning of our good ecumenical friend. This was evidenced three weeks ago as we gathered in Kinshasa, DRC and sitting at my table was the Catholic Bishop who was our guest. I celebrate the fact that it is possible that we can be ministers of the gospel, together, in a needy world and still hold dearly to denominational doctrine, creed and distinctives, as we show what it means to be Christ like.

On behalf of Salvationists around the world I wish to encourage His Holiness to continue to be a clear voice on many complicated matters. The Church should never abdicate its responsibility to find its role in the public square and in the consciousness of the nations. Your words officially released into the world through traditional means and through social media is valued and has meaning for many. I applaud your clear messaging and your prophetic voice. I also note the value of your voice, both spoken and written word, on matters that remain difficult for society and for the church.

The Salvation Army stands with you as the fight against poverty intensifies. We acknowledge the attack upon families and would easily agree with your comments on marriage, domestic violence, the care of our children and the importance of nurturing those in our care and under our influence. Like you, Salvationists are mindful of injustice towards many human beings and when and where possible, we take a stand and engage in costly compassion.

154 years ago, God spoke to William and Catherine Booth and The Salvation Army began to take its place in the world. Sadly, many of the social evils, levels of poverty along with widespread marginalization continue to exist today. The spiritual warfare and the fight for good and the redemption of humanity is desperately needed. May God keep His church faithful in its call to mission.

We continue to share with you, the value of human life and the belief that we are all created in His image. We begin as we influence children through education and continue through a lifetime of Christian influence leading to mature Christians who are the embodiment of Christ our Saviour, in the world.

My call to the Salvation Army in the days in which I lead, include a *Call to be Ready*, spiritually prepared for our part in the God's Mission in the world. There is a *Call to Engage* in such a way that The Salvation Army remains relevant and fit for purpose and always welcoming others into our worship and our fellowship. The Call finishes with a plea to *Take Responsibility*. This call has a particular focus on embracing and encouraging our youth and emerging generations. We, like you, are aware of the challenge to be as inclusive as possible without compromising our doctrine and our understanding of biblical theology.

My sense is that we live today in a time when society stands on the edge of spiritual impoverishment. I would dare to say that the outcome of secularization, materialism and the attack on truth and persecution will increase and for many, faith is pushed to the margins of life.

I stand with you as a watchman for our people, calling them, shepherding them and loving them into God's embrace.

Thank you for your leadership, your clear voice, your sense of conviction and for the evidence of courage that fuels progressive leadership.

Thank you for these rich moments. May God Bless you in every aspect of your life as you lead and equip His church.

and

[<http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/salvation-army/other-documents-and-events/general-peddle-s-address-to-pope-francis.html>]