Vatican

Vatican News



Pope Francis arrives to lead an audience with members of the U.S.-based Papal Foundation at the Vatican April 28, 2022. The pope praised the group for its generosity in helping fund humanitarian and church projects around the world. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Today's "growing culture of indifference and individualism" must be countered with prayer and adoration, which inspires solidarity with those in need, Pope Francis said.

Charitable efforts guided and inspired by the Catholic faith "must be continually nourished by participation in the life of the church, the reception of the sacraments, and time spent quietly before the Lord in prayer and adoration," the pope told more than 60 members of The Papal Foundation and their families April 12.

The U.S. foundation describes itself as the only charitable organization in the United States dedicated to fulfilling the pope's requests for the needs of the Catholic Church. Donors to the foundation, known as Stewards of St. Peter, make annual pilgrimages to Rome and have an opportunity to meet the pope.

Francis reminded the group that the pilgrimage this year is taking place during the Year of Prayer in preparation for the Holy Year 2025, and he encouraged them to "not forget to adore the Lord" in silent adoration. "We have neglected this form of prayer and we need to take it up again: adoring the Lord in silence."

"Through our perseverance in prayer, we gradually become 'a single heart and soul' with both Jesus and others, which then translates into solidarity and the sharing of our daily bread," he said, referencing a passage from the Acts of the Apostles.

The pope noted that although the donors may not personally meet the beneficiaries of their generosity, "the programs of The Papal Foundation foster a spiritual and fraternal bond with people from many different cultures, languages and regions who receive assistance."

The foundation announced in a statement April 12 that it will dedicate $14.74 million to grants, scholarships and humanitarian aid in 2024.

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Close to $10 million will be distributed to grant recipients identified by the Vatican, supporting 118 projects in more than 60 countries, the foundation said, including projects to provide for basic needs such as access to clean water; renovating schools, churches, convents and seminaries; and building health care facilities. The foundation also allocated $4 million to its Mission Fund to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief, and it will provide $819,000 in scholarships to enable more than 100 priests, women religious and seminarians to study in Rome.

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley of Boston, chairman of the foundation's board of trustees, said in the statement that the generosity of The Papal Foundation's donors prioritizes the needs of the poor and vulnerable "in a society where the divide between rich and poor continues to grow."

In their meeting, Francis thanked the group for helping the successors of St. Peter "to build up many local churches and care for large numbers of the less fortunate."

Cardinals O'Malley, Blase J. Cupich of Chicago and Wilton D. Gregory of Washington attended the meeting as trustees of the foundation, as well as Archbishops Samuel J. Aquila of Denver and Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans and Bishop James Checchio of Metuchen, New Jersey.

According to the foundation's website, it has awarded more than $200 million in grants and scholarships selected by the popes since its founding in 1988.