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## Pope Francis: "Violence against women shows how urgent it is to form men capable of healthy relationships".

"We see from the sad news of these days, from the terrible news of violence against women, how urgent it is to educate to respect and care: to form men capable of healthy relationships," **Pope Francis** said during the audience granted to delegations from the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies (FISC), the Italian Union of Periodical Press (USPI), the Coral Association and the AIART Media Citizens Association. Without mentioning it explicitly, the Pope seemed to be referring to the tragic murder of Giulia Cecchettin. "You deal with the press, television, radio and new technologies, with commitment to educating readers and listeners about the media", Francis said in his opening remarks: "Your widespread roots testify to your desire to reach people with care and proximity, with humanity. Indeed, I would say that you well represent that 'human geography' that animates the Italian territory." "This, after all, is what communication is all about: bringing people together, weaving threads of communion, building bridges without raising walls," the Pope said, encouraging those present to

"always renew your commitment to the promotion of the dignity of people, to justice and truth, to legality and educational co-responsibility."

Francis invited "not to lose sight of three paths in the context of today's great communication highways, which are ever faster and more congested, and which must always be travelled." These are: formation, protection and witness. "**To communicate is to form people. To communicate is to form society,**" Francis reminded those present. This formation "is not a simple task, it is a vital issue" because "the future of society is at stake," the Pope said. "Formation is the way to connect generations, to promote dialogue between the young and the elderly, that intergenerational alliance that is fundamental today more than ever." Francis then gave precise instructions on "how to educate, especially the younger generations immersed in an increasingly digital context": "Prudence and simplicity are two basic educational ingredients to navigate today's complexity, especially the web, where it is necessary not to give in to the temptation to sow anger and hatred", is the Pope's first recommendation. "Prudence, lived with simplicity of heart, is that virtue that helps to see far, that leads us to act with foresight, with forward thinking", the Pope explained: "And there are no courses for having prudence; one cannot study to have prudence. Prudence is exercised, it is lived, it is an attitude that is born from the heart and mind together, and then it is developed. Prudence, lived with simplicity of heart, always helps us to be have foresight."

"The Catholic weeklies bring this wise outlook into the homes of the people"

the Pope's homage: "They do not only provide the news of the moment, which is easily burnt, but also convey a humane vision, a Christian vision aimed at forming minds and hearts, so that they do not allow themselves to be deformed by words that are shouted or by news items that, passing with morbid curiosity from black to pink, neglect the clarity of white." "I encourage you

to promote an 'ecology of communication' in territories, schools and families, among yourselves."

Francis remarked: "You have a vocation to remind us, in a simple and understandable style, that beyond the news and scoops, there are always feelings, stories, flesh and blood people to be respected as if they were your own relatives." In the field of communication, "it is fundamental to promote tools that protect everyone, especially the weakest, minors, the elderly and people with

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disabilities, and to protect them from the intrusiveness of the digital world and the seductions of provocative and polemic communication.” “Digital communication wants to bring everything out into the open; people’s lives are combed over, laid bare and bandied about, often anonymously”, the denunciation enshrined in “Fratelli Tutti”, which the Pope mentioned during the audience: “Respect for others disintegrates, and even as we dismiss, ignore or keep others distant, we can shamelessly peer into every detail of their lives.” “Your entities, engaged in this sector, can enable the growth of a protected media citizenship; they can support safeguards to freedom of information and promote civic awareness, so that rights and duties are recognized in this field too”, Francis’ thesis, for whom “it is a question of communicative democracy.” “And please, do this fearlessly, like David against Goliath”, the Pope’s encouragement: “Do not just play defensively but, remaining “small inside”, think big, because you are called to a great task: to protect, through words and images, the dignity of people, especially the dignity of the small and the poor, God's favourites.” “Fidelity to the Gospel presupposes the capacity to risk for goodness. And to go against the grain: to speak about fraternity in an individualistic world; about peace in a world at war; about attention to the poor in an intolerant and indifferent world”, the final recommendation for the world of communication. “But this can be done credibly only if you first bear witness to what you say”, the Pope said recalling the Blessed Carlo Acutis, who “was well aware that the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism and buying the latest thing on the market, obsessed with our free time, caught up in negativity. But he knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty.”

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