

## **Pope Francis supports peace education in schools**

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(Vatican Radio) The Director of the Vatican Press Office Father Federico Lombardi said Pope Francis is an enthusiastic supporter of peace education in schools. Father Lombardi was speaking at a press conference in the Vatican on Tuesday held to speak about the “Factory of Peace” project that has been launched by leading educational, political and church figures to help schoolchildren realise the importance of peace and dialogue with others. The press conference comes just days before a scheduled meeting between Pope Francis and seven thousand children in the Vatican (on May 11th) to talk about the themes of peace, love, welcome and integration.

Father Lombardi quoted Pope Francis’ words: “We will not change the world unless we change education” and said the Holy Father has reiterated the need to foster a “culture of encounter” which can then build a harmonious and peaceful world. Such an encounter is not “vague and abstract, but an invitation to genuinely meet real people in order to initiate a thorough exchange and therefore a common path to a better society.” Father Lombardi went on to stress that this message of encounter must be repeated over and over again, in order to address world problems such as conflict, hardship, exclusion and the plight of migrants and refugees. He said the Pope is convinced that many of these problems can be traced back to a culture of waste, which itself stems from a selfish attitude.

Pope Francis has been leading the way in this endeavour long before his election as Pope. Whilst serving as Archbishop of Buenos Aires he founded the Scholas Occurrentes organisation to promote networking between schools in different countries. The organisation uses sports, arts and technology to bring young people together and create a common bond.

(From Vatican Radio)