



## Our Promise With You

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For the first time in the history of the Italian Scout and Guide movement, all of its members, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Rangers, Rovers, Leaders and Scout Adults, met with the Holy Father in a private audience. It was a major celebration of the 30th anniversary of AGESCI, and the 50th anniversary of

MASCI, and most importantly the 26 years of the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

This Pope has always held a great affection and closeness to Scouts. AGESCI members, together with Scout Adults belonging to MASCI, renewed their Promise with the Holy Father. They wanted to express not only their fidelity to Scouting, but also their full acceptance of the Gospel and their commitment to be witness to Christ and as actors in the new evangelism.



St. Peter's square was peacefully invaded by over 40,000 Scouts and Guides wearing their distinctive blue shirts. Songs and dances belonging to the Scout and Guide tradition encouraged participation in a celebrative atmosphere.

Audio and video clips of the Pope's speeches to AGESCI at several national events were broadcast. Presentations on the implications of the Promise in Baden-Powell's writings were given. Priests who historically have given a special contribution to the Movement were also heard, including Father Ruggi d'Aragona (who founded the Italian Guide Movement) and Father Tarcisio (son of Blessed Beltrame Quattrocchi).

The youngest Italian Brownie and a Rover who served abroad spoke about the meaning of the Promise. A leader who was born in the same year as AGESCI was asked to speak about fidelity to the Promise. The lives of four Scouts who remained true to the values of the Promise were presented for reflection, namely Blesseds Marcel Callò, Wincenty Stefan Frelichowski, Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi.



Chiara Sapigni and Lino Lacagnina, chairpersons of AGESCI's governing board said: "We had the pleasure to see an extraordinary participation to this event. This is a witness to the fact that AGESCI Scouts and Guides truly and completely live by the values of the Faith and have a special, filial relationship with Pope John Paul II".

Nellina Rapisarda and Piero Gavinelli, AGESCI National Guide and Scout Commissioners, expressed their wish that "the paternal blessing of the Holy Father might help to foster the perception of Scouting and Guiding among younger generations as a modern and fascinating experience. In this way, they will be able to make a better contribution towards the creation of a society better than the one they found".