



*To the World Assembly  
of the United Bible Societies*

I send cordial greetings to the delegates and participants from countries throughout the world gathered in Philadelphia for the World Assembly of the United Bible Societies. It is my hope that these days of discussion, study and prayer will advance your efforts to spread the Gospel by making the inspired Scriptures ever more accessible to the men and women of our time.

The theme of your Assembly – *God's Word: Living Hope for All* – evokes not only the continuing urgency of the Risen Lord's mandate to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth, but also the immense work which remains to be done in making its saving message available to every people in every language. We can be grateful to God that in our own day the "living hope" to which we have been reborn in Christ (cf. *1 Pet* 1:3) has borne rich fruit through ecumenical cooperation in this great missionary enterprise. This is particularly evident in the production of common translations of the Bible, which represent a significant step forward in the pursuit of Christian unity and shared witness to the Gospel.

I pray that your efforts in the service of God's word will lead you, and all associated with the work of the United Bible Societies, to experience more fully the joy of the Gospel, to make its message of living hope everywhere felt, and thus "to light a fire in the heart of the world" (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 271).

From the Vatican, 18 April 2016

*Francis*