



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Saturday 12 May 2001

Dear Missionaries of the Holy Spirit,

1. May the peace of the Risen Lord and the presence of his Spirit be with you always! I warmly thank you for this visit as the General Council and I thank your Superior General for the kind words he addressed to me.

Our meeting is in continuity with the one held in 1913 between my Predecessor St Pius X and the Venerable Servant of God Ramón Ibarra y González, Archbishop of Puebla, and Concepción Cabrera de Arminda, in which he asked them to begin the foundation. On that occasion you received the name, *Missionaries of the Holy Spirit*, a name which your Founder, the Ven. Servant of God Fr Félix de Jesús Rougier, said was "the whole program of your religious and priestly life".

Continue with renewed spirit the work that the Church has entrusted to you! I know, that as the General Council, you have a specific task, suggested by what the Holy Spirit mandated in your XIII General Chapter: "Enter into the third millennium aware that, consecrated by the mission, you rethink and direct your pastoral work with creative fidelity".

Dear Sons, carry forward the delicate mission which corresponds to your charism, and, guided by the Holy Spirit, help your brothers to give an eloquent witness of unity and pastoral charity in the Church.

2. On this occasion I invite you to fix your gaze on the Face of Christ. I have asked the whole Church to do so in my last Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (cf. nn. 16-28). According to the charism you have received, contemplate Christ anointed by the Holy Spirit, to announce the Good News to the poor and to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord (cf. Lk 4: 18-19); look at him while

he dedicates his time and his efforts to follow carefully the spiritual journey of his disciples (cf. Mk 6: 7-13, 30-33). Your model is Jesus the Priest, compassionate and merciful; Jesus, willing victim of a love which impels him to consecrate himself to our salvation at every moment even to handing over of his life, and taking it up again in glory.

From contemplation there arises the urgency for a profound and constant personal and community conversion that, as your Founder said, impels you to renew your loving attention to God, so that you can meet Him in daily prayer, in sacramental experience, and in attentive listening to the Word.

3. In the life of the Church and of every religious institute, contemplating the Risen Lord and listening attentively to the Word fosters unity. I wish to remind you that seeking and promoting communion and praying for it is the duty of all. This does not mean a uniformity that makes us lose our personal characteristics, but rather the effort to incarnate all together the richness of the communitarian body, moved by the same Spirit and committed to carrying out an identical mission. As the Lord says: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13: 35).

The XIII General Chapter has clearly outlined, for your institute, points of renewal concerning the promotion of the holiness of the People of God. Together we must build a more just and human world in which all are brothers according to the plan of God. Therefore the chapter has asked you to make your service to the priesthood and to the Works of the Cross effective and dynamic. At the same time it has exhorted you to renew yourselves and dedicate yourselves to the ministerial service of spiritual direction.

4. Moved by the Spirit "*Duc in altum*" (Lk 5: 4), put out into the deep, transforming your commitment into pastoral directives that correspond to the demands of your charism and the needs of the communities entrusted to you.

Direct your efforts to spreading an authentic pedagogy of holiness (cf. Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 31), aware that "all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love" (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 40).

Since your updated Constitutions single out priests from among those to whom your pastoral mission is directed (205), you must renew your awareness that the call to holiness "concerns primarily us Bishops and you, beloved priests. Before our 'doing', it calls into question our 'being'. 'You shall be holy', says the Lord, 'for I the Lord your God am holy' (Lv 19: 2)" (*Homily for the Chrism Mass 2001*, n. 2).

In my Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* you will find useful indications and precise

suggestions that will enlighten your way forward in this special ministry. Let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit so that He himself may give the impetus to your creative fidelity. The fraternal collaboration with bishops and with diocesan priests is a privileged way to build up the Church as communion according to your charism.

5. You must continue to work with all who share your spirituality in building an authentic ecclesial communion: "the new century will have to see us more than ever intent on valuing and developing the forums and structures which, in accordance with the Second Vatican Council's major directives, serve to ensure and safeguard communion". (*Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 44, cf. nn. 43-45). I invite you to foster, in the heart of the Family of the Cross, a "spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 43).

Moreover, as I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, "It is necessary to rediscover the great tradition of personal spiritual guidance which has always brought great and precious fruits to the Church's life" (n. 40). Continue with joy and generosity your studies and preparation for what your Constitutions call "the most characteristic of your pastoral activities" (229).

6. Your General Chapter wanted to address the issue of vocations and the internationalization of the institute in the light of the mandate that the Church received from the Risen Lord: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28: 19) and according to the personal example and aspirations of your Founder (cf. XIII General Chapter, *Priority 3*).

Living your consecration joyfully and generously, identifying more sharply your pastoral ministries and keeping alive fraternal love in your communities, these are the items that will become an invitation to all who seek the radical following of Jesus in a religious and priestly vocation. "Besides promoting prayer for vocations, it is essential to act, by means of explicit presentation and appropriate catechesis, with a view to encouraging in those called to the consecrated life that free, willing and generous response which carries into effect the grace of vocation" (*Vita consecrata*, n. 64).

Dear sons, returning to your respective countries, remember Jesus' words: "Io, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28: 20). May the Holy Spirit always accompany you and give you the strength to continue the work entrusted to you by the Church.

I leave you in the maternal embrace of Mary, Mother of the Church, so that you may enter the new millennium full of joyful hope.
