



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE PILGRIMS GATHERED IN ROME  
FOR THE CANONIZATION OF THREE NEW SAINTS**

*Monday, 6 October 2003*

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. I am pleased to meet you the day after the canonization of three shining witnesses of missionary commitment who are particularly dear to you: St [Daniel Comboni](#), St [Arnold Janssen](#) and St [Joseph Freinademetz](#). They are three "champions" of evangelization.

I cordially greet you all and I thank you for coming.

2. I greet you all, dear Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, who are continuing the apostolic action of St [Daniel Comboni](#). He is rightly listed among the champions of the *missionary movement* that had an extraordinary reawakening in the 19th century. I greet in particular your recently elected Superior General, Fr Teresino Serra, and the Religious who are taking part in the General Chapter. I hope that the reflections and guidelines that result from the Chapter Assembly will imbue your institute with new missionary enthusiasm.

Next, I greet you, dear Comboni Missionary Sisters, and you, dear Secular Comboni Missionaries and dear Lay Comboni Missionaries, who are inspired by the charism of St [Daniel Comboni](#).

May God make fruitful your every project, with which you constantly aim to spread the Gospel of hope. May he also bless your efforts in the context of human promotion and especially for youth. In this regard, I warmly hope that you will reconsider and bring to completion the project of *founding a Catholic University in Sudan*, the country that Comboni loved. I am sure that an important cultural institution like this will contribute a high quality service to the whole of Sudan

society.

3. I now address you, dear pilgrims who have come to honour *St Arnold Janssen* and *St Joseph Freinademetz*. I greet you with special affection, dear members of the three Congregations of the Verbite religious family, with your respective Superiors General: Fr Antonio Pernia, Sr Agada Brand and Sr Mary Cecilia Hocbo.

*Arnold Janssen* was an ardent animator of the Church's mission in Central Europe. He showed courage by opening a missionary house in Steyl, in The Netherlands, when the Church was going through difficult times because of the so-called "*Kulturkampf*". By taking new and unexplored routes to spread the Gospel, he attracted numerous collaborators - priests, men and women religious and lay people - who carry on his apostolic work today.

4. I would now like to address a special greeting to you, dear relatives and pilgrims who have come from the Diocese of Bozen-Brixen, Bolzano-Bressanone, and in particular to the Ladin-speaking group. I greet you with affection, dear Ladin pilgrims. May St *Joseph Freinademetz* be an example for you of fidelity to Christ and to his Gospel! Providence, through the Society of the Divine Word, sent him to China where he stayed until he died.

"Your whole life for your beloved Chinese" was the formula that marked the day of his perpetual profession. With God's help he was always faithful to it. He made himself Chinese with the Chinese, assuming their mindset, practices and customs. He held these people in such sincere esteem and affection that he said: "I would like to be Chinese in Heaven.". From Heaven may he continue to watch over that nation and over the whole of the Asian continent.

5. Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us thank God for giving the Church St *Daniel Comboni*, St *Arnold Janssen* and St *Joseph Freinademetz*. May their example and their intercession encourage us to respond generously to our Christian vocation.

May the Virgin Mary help us, whom these new Saints loved as a tender Mother, experiencing her protection and comfort. I accompany you with my prayers as I bless you, your communities and all your loved ones.