



The Holy See

*My Venerable Brothers in the College of Cardinals,
Archbishop Scherer of São Paulo,
Bishops of Brazil and Latin America,
Distinguished Authorities,
Sisters and Brothers in Christ!*

I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips (Ps 32:2)

1. Let us rejoice in the Lord, on this day when we contemplate another marvel of God, who in his admirable providence allows us to taste a trace of his presence in this act of self-giving Love that is the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

Yes, we cannot fail to praise our God. Let all of us praise him, peoples of Brazil and America, let us sing to the Lord of his wonders, because he has done great things for us. Today, Divine Wisdom allows us to gather around his altar with praise and thanksgiving for the grace granted to us in the canonization of [Frei Antônio de Sant'Ana Galvão](#).

I would like to express my thanks for the affectionate words spoken on behalf of all of you by Archbishop Odilo Scherer of São Paulo, and for the great dedication of his predecessor, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, who has done so much to promote the cause of Frei Galvão. I thank each one of you for your presence here, whether you come from this great city or from other cities and nations. I rejoice that, through the communications media, my words and expressions of affection can enter every house and every heart. Be sure of this: the Pope loves you, and he loves you because Jesus Christ loves you.

In this solemn eucharistic celebration, we have listened to the Gospel in which Jesus exultantly proclaims: "*I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes*" (Mt 11:25). I am glad that the elevation to the altars of Frei Galvão will always remain framed in the liturgy that the Church presents to us today.

I greet with affection all the Franciscan community, and especially the Conceptionist Sisters who,

from the Monastery of Light, from the capital of the State of São Paulo, spread the spirituality and the charism of the first Brazilian to be raised to the glory of the altars.

2. Let us give thanks to God for the lasting benefits obtained through the powerful evangelizing influence that the Holy Spirit impressed upon so many souls through Frei Galvão. The Franciscan charism, lived out in the spirit of the Gospel, has borne significant fruits through his witness as an ardent adorer of the Eucharist, as a prudent and wise guide of the souls who sought his counsel, and as a man with a great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, whose "son and perpetual servant" he considered himself to be.

God comes towards us, "he seeks to win our hearts, all the way to the Last Supper, to the piercing of his heart on the Cross, to his appearances after the Resurrection and to the great deeds by which, through the activity of the Apostles, he guided the nascent Church along its path" (Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 17). He reveals himself through his word, in the sacraments and especially in the Eucharist. The life of the Church, therefore, is essentially eucharistic. In his loving providence, the Lord has left us a visible sign of his presence.

When we contemplate the Lord at Mass, raised up by the priest after the consecration of the bread and wine, or when we devoutly adore him exposed in the monstrance, we renew our faith with profound humility, as Frei Galvão did in "*laus perennis*", in a constant attitude of adoration. The Holy Eucharist contains all the spiritual wealth of the Church, that is to say Christ himself, our Passover, the living bread come down from heaven, given life by the Holy Spirit and in turn life-giving because it is the source of Life for mankind. This mysterious and ineffable manifestation of God's love for humanity occupies a privileged place in the heart of Christians. They must come to know the faith of the Church through her ordained ministers, through the exemplary manner in which they carry out the prescribed rites that always point to the eucharistic liturgy as the centre of the entire task of evangelization. The faithful, in their turn, must seek to receive and to venerate the Most Holy Sacrament with piety and devotion, eager to welcome the Lord Jesus with faith, and having recourse, whenever necessary, to the sacrament of reconciliation so as to purify the soul from every grave sin.

3. The significance of Frei Galvão's example lies in his willingness to be of service to the people whenever he was asked. He was renowned as a counsellor, he was a bringer of peace to souls and families, and a dispenser of charity especially towards the poor and the sick. He was greatly sought out as a confessor, because he was zealous, wise and prudent. It is characteristic of those who truly love that they do not want the Beloved to be offended; the conversion of sinners was therefore the great passion of our saint. Sister Helena Maria, the first religious sister destined to belong to the *Recolhimento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, witnessed to what Frei Galvão had said to her: "*Pray that the Lord our God will raise sinners with his mighty arm from the wretched depths of the sins in which they find themselves.*" May this insightful admonition serve as a stimulus to us to recognize in the Divine Mercy the path towards reconciliation with God and our

neighbour, for the peace of our consciences.

4. United with the Lord in the supreme communion of the Eucharist and reconciled with him and our neighbour, we will thus become bearers of that peace which the world cannot give. Will the men and women of this world be able to find peace if they are not aware of the need to be reconciled with God, with their neighbour and with themselves? Highly significant in this regard are the words written by the Assembly of the Senate of São Paulo to the Minister Provincial of the Franciscans at the end of the eighteenth century, describing Frei Galvão as a "man of peace and charity". What does the Lord ask of us? "*Love one another as I have loved you.*" But immediately afterwards he adds: "*Go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last*" (cf. *Jn 15:12,16*). And what fruit does he ask of us, if not that of knowing how to love, drawing inspiration from the example of the Saint of Guaratinguetá?

The renown of his immense charity knew no bounds. People from all over the country went to Frei Galvão, who offered a fatherly welcome to everyone. Among those who came to implore his help were the poor and the sick in body and spirit.

Jesus opens his heart and reveals to us the core of his entire saving message: "*No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends*" (*Jn 15:13*). He himself loved even to the extent of giving his life for us on the Cross. The action of the Church and of Christians in society must have this same inspiration. Pastoral initiatives for the building up of society, if directed towards the good of the poor and the sick, bear within themselves this divine seal. The Lord counts on us and calls us his friends, because it is only to those we love in this way that we are capable of giving the life offered by Jesus through his grace.

As we know, the Fifth General Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate will take as its fundamental theme: "*Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that our Peoples may have Life in Him*". How can we fail to see, then, the need to listen with renewed fervour to God's call, so as to be able to respond generously to the challenges facing the Church in Brazil and in Latin America?

5. "*Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*", says the Lord in the Gospel (*Mt 11:28*). This is the final recommendation that he makes to us. How can we fail to recognize here God's fatherly and at the same time motherly care towards all his children? Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, stands particularly close to us at this moment. Frei Galvão prophetically affirmed the truth of the *Immaculate Conception*. She, the *Tota Pulchra*, the Virgin Most Pure, who conceived in her womb the Redeemer of mankind and was preserved from all stain of original sin, wishes to be the definitive seal of our encounter with God our Saviour. There is no fruit of grace in the history of salvation that does not have as its necessary instrument the mediation of Our Lady.

In fact, the saint that we are celebrating gave himself irrevocably to the Mother of Jesus from his youth, desiring to belong to her for ever and he chose the Virgin Mary to be the Mother and Protector of his spiritual daughters.

My dearest friends, what a fine example Frei Galvão has left for us to follow! There is a phrase included in the formula of his consecration which sounds remarkably contemporary to us, who live in an age so full of hedonism: "*Take away my life before I offend your blessed Son, my Lord!*" They are strong words, the words of an impassioned soul, words that should be part of the normal life of every Christian, whether consecrated or not, and they enkindle a desire for fidelity to God in married couples as well as in the unmarried. The world needs transparent lives, clear souls, pure minds that refuse to be perceived as mere objects of pleasure. It is necessary to oppose those elements of the media that ridicule the sanctity of marriage and virginity before marriage.

In our day, Our Lady has been given to us as the best defence against the evils that afflict modern life; Marian devotion is the sure guarantee of her maternal protection and safeguard in the hour of temptation. And what an unfailing support is this mysterious presence of the Virgin Most Pure, when we invoke the protection and the help of the *Senhora Aparecida*! Let us place in her most holy hands the lives of priests and consecrated laypersons, seminarians and all who are called to religious life.

6. My dear friends, allow me to finish by recalling the Vigil of Prayer at Marienfeld in Germany: in the presence of a multitude of young people, I spoke of the saints of our epoch as true reformers. And I added: "Only from the saints, only from God does true revolution come, the definitive way to change the world" (*Homily*, 20 August 2005). This is the invitation that I address to all of you today, from the first to the last, in this Eucharist without frontiers. God said: "*Be holy, as I am holy*" (*Lev 11:44*). Let us give thanks to God the Father, to God the Son, to God the Holy Spirit from whom, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, we receive all the blessings of heaven; from whom we receive this gift which, together with faith, is the greatest grace that can be bestowed upon a creature: the firm desire to attain the fullness of charity, in the conviction that holiness is not only possible but also necessary for every person in his or her own state of life, so as to reveal to the world the true face of Christ, our friend! Amen!