



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE INSTITUTE OF THE MINIM SISTERS
OF OUR LADY OF SUFFRAGE**

To Reverend Mother Sister Fabiola Detomi

Superior General of the Institute of the Minim Sisters of Our Lady of Suffrage

1. First of all, I want to send my best wishes and greetings to you on the occasion of the General Chapter of your Congregation. I also address them to the sisters called to the service of guiding and directing your religious family, encouraging them to carry out with a generous spirit the delicate task of governance entrusted to them. I greet the chapter sisters, hoping that the experience of these intense days spent in Rome may be a source of human and spiritual enrichment. Lastly, cordial greetings with the assurance of my fatherly support, to each of the Minim Sisters of Our Lady of Suffrage who work in Italy, Argentina, Colombia and Romania.

The Chapter Assembly is an important opportunity to reflect on the ground the community has travelled, and to work out projects of apostolic service in fidelity to the original charism of the institute. The theme: "*Witnessing to Christ, our Hope, in a changing world*" is attuned with the pastoral guidelines of the Italian Bishops for the first decade of the new century and millennium.

Reverend Mother, it is the common intention of this religious family, after the Chapter break, to return with renewed enthusiasm to its daily activities, underlining that Christ, our Hope, is at the basis of all of life and is the goal to which all tend. His mysterious presence keeps alive the eschatological tension which must motivate every believer. Your congregation considers the eschatological tension of human existence as one of the very basic attitudes that it has inherited from your blessed founder.

2. A life woven with hope was the life of Bl. Francesco Faà di Bruno, whom I had the joy to raise to the honours of the altar on 25 September 1988. Impelled by the inner desire to cooperate in the salvation of his brethren, he was concerned with their final destiny. Man's ultimate goal is the

meeting with God, a meeting that one needs to prepare for from now on with a constant ascetical effort, rejecting evil and doing good.

From his youth, Francesco Faà di Bruno was anxious to work for the salvation of souls and for this reason, even before founding the Congregation, he built a church in Turin dedicated to Our Lady of Suffrage. Concern for prayer for the souls of Purgatory is your specific charism, Reverend Mother and dear sisters, which impels you to pray constantly for those who have gone before us. The same charismatic intuition is a concrete incentive to fill every one of our earthly days with the goods that do not fade or spoil.

You deal with an important truth that you intend to proclaim by your evangelizing activities, sustained by prayer and accompanied by accepting and offering to God your suffering, in union with Christ's sacrifice so that souls may be saved. The first and highest form of love for our brothers and sisters is the burning desire for their eternal salvation. Christian love knows no bounds and is removed from the bounds of space and time, allowing us to love those who have already left this earth.

3. Dear sisters in Christ, keep intact the spirit of your founder! I want to repeat to you my words on the day of his beatification. "Francesco Faà di Bruno", I said, is "a giant of faith and charity", for his message of light and love, "far from being exhausted, seems timelier than ever, urging all those who have Gospel values at heart to action" (*Homily*, 25 September, n. 4; *ORE*, 24 October 1988, p. 15).

Following in his footsteps, advance with fidelity and courage on the way you have taken, drawing light and strength from his teaching, making living and current his extraordinary experience and shining inheritance. Above all, be tireless, joyful heralds of hope for humanity in our time, who all too often are discouraged by violence and injustices and locked into mere earth-bound horizons.

By imitating your Blessed Founder, may you be the first to be renewed in hope so that, in turn, in the Church and in the world you can be fruitful messengers of hope. May you have a great "thirst" to save souls, helping every brother and sister to discover the "not yet" and the eternal "life above" towards which we are all journeying. The eternal future is built here and now, in time with our daily efforts.

With these sentiments and hopes, dear Sisters, I ask for you, your communities and all those you meet in your daily service, the heavenly intercession of Our Lady of Suffrage and of blessed Francesco Faà di Bruno, as I wholeheartedly bless you and your loved ones.

From Castel Gandolfo, 2 September 2002.

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