



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE TRINITARIAN FAMILY***

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I am pleased to meet you on so important an occasion: this year you are celebrating the eighth centenary of the foundation of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and the fourth centenary of its reform. It is therefore appropriate that the members of the Trinitarian family, firmly rooted in the project of their founder, St John of Matha, and living the same charism, should gather in a "General Assembly" to reflect together on their common problems and possible solutions on the threshold of the new millennium.

I greet the Minister General of the Order and thank him for his kind words. With him I greet those responsible for the various institutes of the Trinitarian family, as well as the men and women religious and lay people who have gathered from all over the world for this assembly. It is a particularly favourable moment to intensify your fidelity to the gift of the Spirit received from the founder and to be more vitally involved in the renewal desired by the Second Vatican Council, so that you can meet the needs and challenges of the world today.

2. For eight centuries, through a variety of historical events, the Trinitarian family, motivated and enlivened by its original charism centred on the glorification of the Trinity and on dedication to human redemption, grew and spread in the Church and the world through the flourishing of various institutes and lay associations. The individual groups are known by the name of the Trinity, to which they are especially dedicated, and by St John of Matha, whom they venerate as their common father. They all share in the same charism of glorifying the Trinity and working for human redemption by devoting themselves to works of charity and to the liberation of those who are poor or enslaved in our day.

Today, in addition to the male branch, the Trinitarian family also consists of women religious of both contemplative and active life. The latter are divided into various congregations: there are the Trinitarian Sisters of Valence, Rome, Valencia, Madrid, Mallorca and Seville. There are also the women's Secular Institute of Trinitarian Oblates and the Secular Trinitarian Order, as well as confraternities and many other lay Trinitarian associations that witness in the world to the secular dimension of the Trinitarian spirit.

Once again I urge them all to live with generous fidelity their original charism, which has remained extraordinarily relevant in today's world. Contemporary man needs to hear salvation proclaimed in the name of the Most Holy Trinity and to be guarded from chains which are no less dangerous for being less obvious than those of former times. The Trinitarian family will therefore do well to listen to the entreaties of those ensnared by modern forms of slavery so that concrete ways may be found to answer their deeply felt expectations.

You are supported in your reflection and commitment by the many brothers and sisters who have preceded you and have left you shining examples of virtue and holiness in living the same charism: men and women religious and lay people whose names, often blood-stained, are enrolled among the the saints and live on in the witness of the Trinitarian tradition.

3. In the light of this heroic witness you would like to make concrete plans for entering the new millennium. In particular, you have thought of establishing an international organization of the Trinitarian family for intervening more effectively in the defence of the persecuted or of those suffering discrimination for their religious faith or for fidelity to their conscience or to Gospel values.

You have called this new organization "International Trinitarian Solidarity", intending to involve the entire family in service to all the suffering and unfortunate people who in their misery long for an "epiphany" of Christ the Redeemer.

Another very important project is the new foundation in Sudan, which you planned as an expression of the redemptive and merciful mission proper to your order. In addition to carrying out the missionary apostolate and that of liberation, the initiative intends to promote interreligious dialogue between Christianity and Islam, in accordance with the directives of the Second Vatican Council, taken up and developed in later documents of the Magisterium.

4. The Great Jubilee of the Incarnation is a further incentive for the entire Trinitarian family to mediate more deeply on the Trinitarian mystery which it sees as the heart of its spirituality. Drawing from this inexhaustible source, it will not fail to be committed to developing all the potential of Trinitarian consecration, enriching it with new fullness. A renewed commitment to liberation from every form of oppression will flow from this intense Trinitarian experience.

The Extraordinary General Chapter, which has just ended, focused your reflection on the theme of

the Domus Trinitatis et Captivorum. With the original spirit of St John of Matha's project - which also deserves appreciation in our day - in such a *Domus* that dynamism of love must reign whose source lies in the Trinitarian mystery and which is extended to God's favourites: slaves and the poor. May the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who is love, spur you to make yourselves a gift of love for others. Unity and love will be the best witness to your Trinitarian vocation in the Church.

May the Blessed Virgin, who down the centuries you have invoked with the lovely prayer: "*Ave, Filia Dei Patris, Ave, Mater Dei Filii, Ave, Sponsa Spiritus Sancti, Sacrarium Sanctissimae Trinitatis*", enable you to contemplate the Mystery with ever greater relish and help you to live the days of the Great Jubilee as a time of renewed hope and serene spiritual rejoicing.

With these hopes, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the members of the Trinitarian family.

Castel Gandolfo, 26 August 1999