



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE DAUGHTERS OF ST ANNE**

*Thursday, 19 December 2002*

*Dear Sisters, Daughters of St Anne,*

1. On the occasion of your General Chapter you wanted to meet the Successor of Peter to confirm your bond of faith and union with the Holy See. I am delighted to receive you and to welcome each of you cordially.

I especially offer my congratulations to the new Mother General, Sr Anna Maria Luisa Prandina, assuring her of my remembrance in prayer so that she may fulfil effectively the important mission entrusted to her. I express to you my appreciation for everything that the Congregation is doing, with generous fidelity to the teachings of Bl. Rosa Gattorno. In meeting those of you who are present, I certainly intend to greet warmly all the other "branches" of your spiritual family, whose members I encourage to persevere in the way of life they have chosen, under the protection of St Anne, Mother of Mary Immaculate.

2. The Chapter Assembly, during which you are reflecting on the theme: Fidelity to the Spirit, with Christ and Mother Rosa, to enter into the *"historical processes"*, *putting out into the deep with the optimism of Easter*, is a favourable opportunity to review the past with gratitude, live the present with devotion and look with confidence to the future, giving the heavenly Father thanks for all he has granted you to achieve so far.

In the past six years your Institute has expanded its missionary work, doing the utmost to serve a great many needy people, especially in the sectors of education, human advancement, health care and assistance to the elderly. Your activity has been encouraged and stimulated by the Apostolic Exhortations which set out the guidelines of the continental Synods, celebrated in preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. As you yourselves wished to underline, these texts are the soil

and the "grammar" for an appropriate understanding of the reality in which your congregation too lives and must act.

"O sweet Jesus, those who love you know how to speak well! Therefore, daughter, love and do all that you wish, for you will do everything well". Your Foundress sent you out into the world with this spirit and you intend to continue to draw on it in living your religious consecration.

3. Dear friends, in the new millennium which has just begun we need discerning eyes to recognize the work that Christ accomplishes, and a generous heart to become his hands (cf. *Novo Millennio ineunte*, n. 58). Hence the fundamental importance of prayer, it enables us to recognize the signs and instruments of the Redeemer. Mother Rosa Gattorno still recommends it to you today: "Prayer is the key to grace: it opens up the Lord's treasures".

May the heart of your community be the Eucharist, the living presence of Christ among human persons. Frequently spend time in the company of Jesus in the Eucharist. On this subject, your Foundress used to repeat: "Before Jesus, time has no time".

If you are accustomed to contemplating the face of Christ in the silence of prayer, you will be able to recognize him in every person you meet. During this year, which I wished to be the *Year of the Rosary*, endeavour to contemplate the face of the Redeemer with Mary's gaze, especially with the help of the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary. As I wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (*Rosary of the Virgin Mary*), "in the sobriety of its elements, it has *all the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety*, of which it can be said to be a compendium" (n. 1). It is at the school of Mary that we most easily learn to discern the priorities of our apostolic activity.

4. Dear sisters, although you may be worried by the dwindling numbers of religious personnel and the weakening of your vitality in Italy, you must not lose heart. God will not fail to support those who confidently serve him. You are asked in the first place to dedicate yourselves to loving and serving the Lord, expending your energies for the benefit of his Mystical Body (cf. *Vita consecrata*, n. 104). Imitating your Foundress, know how to place your confidence in God and, "since the Work is his, he will provide for everything". From Jesus and his Spirit will come the powerful strength that will enable you to consolidate your current activities and impel you towards new apostolic and missionary goals, to bring the joy of divine love to the many people awaiting concrete actions of evangelical charity.

This is my fervent hope for your entire Institute. As we approach Christmas, I am happy to wish each one of you the blessings of the season and invoking on you and on your congregation the protection of Mary Immaculate and of Bl. Rosa Gattorno, I wholeheartedly impart my Blessing to you.

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