



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE INSTITUTE OF THE
DAUGHTERS OF ST CAMILLUS***

Saturday, 15 June 2002

Dear Sisters,

1. I am pleased to welcome each of you, religious of the Institute of the Daughters of St Camillus, gathered in Rome for your General Chapter. Thank you for this meeting with which you wanted to show your devotion and affection for the Vicar of Christ and confirm your fidelity to the Magisterium of the Universal Pastor of the Church. I greet your new Superior General, Sr Laura Biondo, and thank her for her courteous words on behalf of those who are present and your Congregation. I ask the Lord for abundant gifts of light and grace for her and for the General Council, so that they may perform their new task in accord with God's will.

2. I recall very distinctly the beatifications of your founders, Josephine Vannini and Luigi Tezza, whom I had the joy of raising to the honours of the altar; the first in 1994 and the second in 2001.

They were special moments of grace that are a constant invitation to grow in spiritual fervour and apostolic zeal.

Enriched by these gifts, you have decided to dedicate the General Chapter to becoming more familiar with the spiritual legacy of the new Blesseds, in order to continue on the path of holiness consciously and enthusiastically. This choice will allow you to confirm the path you have taken and to adapt your charism to the changed conditions of the times, to become more credible witnesses to the merciful love of the Good Samaritan.

I am aware of your generous devotion to the service of the poor and the sick, as well as of the vital impetus with which your religious family, present on four continents, has recently given to your

missionary activity in South America, in the Orient and in Eastern Europe. I encourage you to continue in this direction, motivated and sustained by the example of Bl. Luigi Tezza, an authentic pilgrim of the mission.

3. Your chief concern is to make the merciful Christ present in your contacts with your neighbour, starting with those in the congregation. Let the spirit of fraternal love reign among you, so that each religious may feel she is understood and appreciated in her abilities and no one may complain of injustice or abuse of power.

You are called to be tangible signs of Christ's tenderness, especially where suffering oppresses human beings in body and spirit. You are helped in this task by your state as consecrated women who, looking to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, guarantee special sensitivity to what is essentially human even in contexts of suffering and marginalization (cf. *Mulieris dignitatem*, n. 30). This is a valid contribution which you can make to the far-reaching action of the new evangelization that involves the whole People of God.

After the example of St Camillus and your Blessed Founders, proclaim in word and, above all, in deed, the joy of sacrificing your lives for your needy brothers and sisters. And in this unique mission, do not be afraid ardently to tend toward the heights of heroic charity.

"As true daughters of St Camillus, you must be in the front line of charity and you must always be prepared to make any sacrifice for love". Bl. Luigi Tezza wrote these words to his first disciples, offering to all the sisters a valuable criterion by which to know if they live their vocation faithfully.

4. Besides, along with a deeply human approach to nursing the sick person, a living image of Christ, you are asked in your daily work to take to everyone the saving message of the Gospel.

Through the institutions for social assistance and health care and the schools you run, make yourselves promoters of what fosters humanity and charity that can inspire in those who serve the sick the desire to transform *treating* into *caring* and *profession* into *vocation*. To achieve this goal you will need a harmonious blend of intelligence and feeling, of technique and the capacity to welcome the sick. At the same time you should support the "culture of life" basing your teaching on the conviction that the human person has a unique value and that human life is sacred. For this reason it should always be defended and protected, from birth to its natural end.

5. Dear sisters, remain faithful to your marvellous vocation and do your best to live it with joyful dedication. As the witness of your founders reminds you, this is the way to reach perfect charity and full conformity with Christ, whom you have chosen to serve in the sick and suffering.

With these sentiments, as I entrust you to the heavenly intercession of the Mother of the Lord, comforter of the afflicted, of St Camillus de Lellis, of Bl. Luigi Tezza and Bl. Josephine Vannini, I

warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to each of you and gladly extend it to all your sisters, working all over the world.

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