



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Monday, 26 May 2003

*To Father Pierre Schouver, C.S.Sp.
Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit*

1. I am pleased to greet you today, dear Father Superior General, with the members of the General Council of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, founded on 27 May 1703. An anniversary is always an opportunity for giving thanks for the ground covered and the gifts received. The Church gladly does so today, joining you in thanking the Lord for all that has been achieved by your Congregation in three centuries, especially in the evangelization of Africa, the Antilles and South America.

Celebrating an anniversary also means turning a corner and going ahead. What I said to the whole Church (cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 8), I repeat to each one of you: "*Duc in altum!*" "Put out into the deep!". Be faithful to the dual heritage of your founders: attention to the poor and to missionary service, in other words, the proclamation of the Good News of Christ to all people.

These two approaches to life unfold vast horizons before you. It is a matter of joining those whom the world either keeps dependent or alienates: the poor, who account for the vast majority of the inhabitants of some continents, but who also live in our more advanced societies. In this way you will be witnesses of Christ's closeness to them and enable them to hear his joyful call.

2. Without allowing yourselves to be halted by problems, which have always been and will always be, entrust yourselves to the freedom and power of the Spirit who accompanies and guides the Church. It is the Holy Spirit who builds up the Church like a family: help our contemporaries discover her through community and fraternal life, a powerful sign of evangelical life, and have at heart the search for unity and remain attached to this devotion to the Holy Spirit which has always

distinguished your religious family!

3. From the outset, your founders desired to place you under the protection of the Virgin Mary and her Immaculate Heart. I once again entrust you to her kindly intercession, you yourselves and all the members of your Congregation scattered throughout the world to serve Christ and his Church.

May the Virgin's confidence in the Word of God always light your life! I very warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you.