



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE SERVANTS OF SUFFERING

Thursday, 2 December 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am pleased to offer a cordial greeting to all of you who have wished to pay this visit to the Successor of Peter on the 20th anniversary of the foundation of your Institute. Welcome!

I greet Archbishop Benigno Luigi Papa of Taranto who has accompanied you, and I thank him for his kind words on your behalf. I would then like to express to your Founder, Mons. Pietro Galeone, and to your entire family of "Servants of Suffering", my deepest appreciation for the work you are doing in Italy and in other nations, following Christ who with his passion redeemed the world.

2. Your Secular Institute was born from an explicit desire of St Pio of Pietrelcina [Padre Pio], for the purpose of serving all who are suffering. In the span of 10 years it has grown considerably, becoming a vehicle of hope for so many people who are harshly tried in body and in spirit. You are called to proclaim the Gospel of suffering, illumined by faith. In my Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris* I wrote that for Christians, "the Gospel of suffering signifies, not only the presence of suffering in the Gospel, as one of the themes of the Good News, but also the revelation of the salvific power and salvific significance of suffering in Christ's messianic mission and, subsequently, in the mission and vocation of the Church" (n. 25).

3. Dear friends, looking at the cloud of physical and spiritual pain that envelopes humanity, how necessary your witness is! As "Servants of Suffering", be silent "Cyrenians" who help all who are put to the test and assure them that God does not forget a single tear but indeed, gathers them all and keeps count of them in his book (cf. Ps 56[55]: 9).

Follow in the footsteps of Padre Pio, whose teachings are always very timely; be constantly

inspired by them. Be apostles, like him, of prayer and suffering! Prayer illumines hearts and makes them readier to accept suffering; suffering, received with docile abandonment in God, opens the soul to understanding the pain of others.

May the Blessed Virgin accompany you and make you ever more faithful to your mission in the Church. With this wish, I bless you all.

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