



The Holy See

CAPPELLA PAPAIE FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF 6 SERVANTS OF GOD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

*World Mission Sunday
Sunday, 20 October 2002*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

1. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28,19).*

The Risen Lord took his leave of the Apostles in this way before returning to the Father, "Go". His last word is an invitation to the mission, that is at the same time a *promise*, a *testament* and a *duty*. Christ entrusts his message of salvation to his disciples and asks them to spread it and to witness to it to the ends of the earth.

This is the meaning of today's World Mission Sunday. By a providential coincidence, on this very day, we proclaim new Blesseds who in an extraordinary way fulfilled the commandment of proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel. They are [Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa](#), [Andrea Giacinto Longhin](#), [Marcantonio Durando](#), [Mary of the Passion](#) and [Liduina Meneguzzi](#).

Their Beatification on the very day of World Mission Sunday reminds us that the primary service we can give to the mission is the sincere and constant quest for holiness. We cannot witness to the Gospel genuinely, if first of all we do not live it faithfully.

2. My thoughts turn first of all to the two young catechists from Uganda, *Daudi Okelo* and *Jildo Irwa*. These two courageous witnesses were no more than boys when, with simplicity and faith, they shed their blood for Christ and his Church. With youthful enthusiasm for their mission of teaching the faith to their fellow countrymen, they set out in 1918 for northern Uganda. It was

there, as evangelization was just beginning in that region, that they chose to embrace death rather than abandon the area and forsake their duties as catechists. Truly, in their lives and witness we can see that they were "*beloved by God and chosen by him*" (cf. I Thes 1,4).

Daudi and Jildo are today raised to the glory of the altar. They are given to the entire Christian community as examples of holiness and virtue, and as models and intercessors for catechists throughout the world, especially in those places where catechists still suffer for the faith, sometimes facing social marginalization and even personal danger. May the life and witness of these two dedicated servants of the Gospel inspire many men and women - in Uganda, in Africa and elsewhere - to answer with generosity the call to be a catechist, bringing knowledge of Christ to others and strengthening the faith of those communities that have recently received the Gospel of salvation.

3. "*I have called you by name*" (Is 45,4). The words which the prophet Isaiah uses to show the mission entrusted by God to his elect express well the vocation of *Andrea Giacinto Longhin*, the humble Capuchin who for 32 years was Bishop of the Diocese of Treviso at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was a simple, poor, humble, generous Pastor always available for his neighbour, in accord with the genuine tradition of the Capuchins.

They called him the Bishop of essential things. In an age that was noted for tragic and painful events, he was outstanding as a father for his priests and a zealous pastor of the people, always close to the people, especially in moments of difficulty and danger. In this way he anticipated what the Second Vatican Council emphasized when it taught that evangelization was "one of the principal duties of bishops" (*Christus Dominus*, n. 12; cf. *Redemptoris missio*, n. 63).

4. "Remembering ... your work of faith, and labour of love and your steadfastness of hope" (I Thes 1,2-3). The words of the Apostle draw the spiritual portrait of Father *Marcantonio Durando*, of the Congregation of the Mission and worthy son of the Piedmont region. He lived the faith and a burning spiritual zeal, shunning every kind of compromise or interior tepidity.

At the school of St Vincent de Paul, he learned how to recognize in the humanity of Christ the greatest, most accessible and disarming expression of the love of God for every human being. Still today he indicates to us the mystery of the Cross as the culminating moment in which the unsearchable mystery of God's love is revealed.

5. "*We know, brethren beloved of God, that you were chosen by him*" (I Thes 1,4). *Mary of the Passion* let herself be seized by God who was able to satisfy the thirst for truth that motivated her. Founding the *Franciscan Missionaries of Mary*, she burned to communicate *the torrents of love that sprang up in her and wished to extend them over the world.* At the heart of the missionary commitment, she placed prayer and the Eucharist because for her adoration and mission blended to become the same work. Drawing on Scripture and the Fathers of the

Church, combining a mystical and an active vocation, passionate and intrepid, she gave herself with an intuitive and bold readiness to the universal mission of the Church. Dear Sisters, learn from your Foundress, in profound communion with the Church, and welcome the invitation to live, with renewed fidelity, the intuitions of your founding charism, so that the number of those who discover *Jesus, who makes us enter into the mystery of the love that is God*, may be more abundant.

6. "*Give to the Lord, families of peoples, give to the Lord glory and power*" (Ps 95 [96],7). The words of the responsorial Psalm express well the missionary yearning, that permeated the heart of Sr *Liduina Meneguzzi*, of the Sisters of St Francis de Sales. In the course of her brief but intense life, Sr Liduina poured herself out for her poorer and suffering brothers, particularly at the hospital of the mission of Dire Dawa in Ethiopia.

With fervent apostolic zeal, she sought to make known to everyone the only Saviour Jesus. At the school of Him who was "meek and humble of heart" (cf. Mt 11,29), she learned to spread the charity that flows from a pure heart, overcoming mediocrity and inner inertia.

7. "*Behold, I am with you all days even to the end of the world*" (Mt 28,20). This is the promise that Christ made to his disciples as he prepared to leave the world to return to his Father.

I am with you all days! Jesus says, I am with you, pilgrim Church in the world. I am with you, young ecclesial communities in missionary lands. Do not be afraid to enter into dialogue with everyone. Take the message of salvation to everyone. Take courage.

May Mary, Star of evangelization, and the new Blesseds protect and accompany your steps on the highways of the world. Amen.

© Copyright 2002 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana