



The Holy See

BEATIFICATION OF FIVE SERVANTS OF GOD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 3 October 2004

1. "*Verbum Domini manet in aeternum - The Word of the Lord will endure for ever*". The Gospel acclamation takes us back to the very roots of the faith. As we face the passing of time and the continuous upheavals of history, the revelation that God offered us in Christ endures for ever and opens horizons of eternity to us on our earthly journey.

This is the unique experience of the five new Blessed: *Peter Vigne*, *Joseph-Marie Cassant*, *Anne Catherine Emmerick*, *Maria Ludovica De Angelis* and *Charles of Austria*. They let the Word of God guide them as a bright and safe beacon that never ceased to enlighten them on their way.

2. Contemplating Christ present in the Eucharist and the saving Passion, *Fr Peter Vigne* was led to be a true disciple and a faithful missionary of the Church. May his example give the faithful the desire to draw daring for the mission from the love of the Eucharist and from the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! Let us ask him to move the hearts of the young so that, if God calls them, they are ready to dedicate themselves to him without reserve in the priesthood or in the Religious life. May the Church in France find in Fr Vigne an example to raise up new sowers of the Gospel!

3. *Fr Joseph-Marie* always put his trust in God, in contemplation of the mystery of the Passion and in communion with Christ present in the Eucharist.

Thus, he was imbued with love for God and abandoned himself to him, "*the only true happiness on earth*", detaching himself from worldly goods in the silence of the Trappist monastery. In the midst of trials, his eyes fixed on Christ, he offered up his sufferings for the Lord and for the Church.

May our contemporaries, especially contemplatives and the sick, discover following his example

the mystery of prayer, which raises the world to God and gives strength in trial!

4. "God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control" (II Tm 1: 7). St Paul's words invite us to collaborate in building the Kingdom of God in the perspective of faith. They can be aptly applied to the life of *Bl. Ludovica De Angelis*, whose existence was totally dedicated to the glory of God and the service of her peers.

She was a person with an outstanding mother's heart, leadership qualities and the daring typical of saints. She also showed concrete and generous love to sick children, making sacrifices to bring them relief; with her co-workers in La Plata Hospital, she was a model of cheerfulness and responsibility, creating a family atmosphere. As a Daughter of Our Lady of Mercy, she set an authentic example to the Sisters in her community. She was sustained in all this by prayer and by making her life a continuous communication with the Lord.

5. *Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerick* told of "the sorrowful passion of our Lord Jesus Christ" and lived it in her body. The fact that the daughter of poor peasants who sought tenaciously to be close to God became the well-known "Mystic of the Land of Münster" was a work of divine grace. Her material poverty contrasted with her *rich interior life*. We are equally impressed by the new Blessed's patience in putting up with physical weakness and her *strong character*, as well as her *unshakable faith*.

She found this strength in the Most Holy Eucharist. Her example opened the hearts of poor and rich alike, of simple and cultured persons, whom she instructed in loving dedication to Jesus Christ.

Still today, she passes on to all the saving message: Through the wounds of Christ we have been saved (cf. I Pt 2: 24).

6. The decisive task of Christians consists in seeking, recognizing and following God's will in all things. *The Christian statesman, Charles of Austria*, confronted this challenge every day. To his eyes, war appeared as "something appalling". Amid the tumult of the First World War, he strove to promote the peace initiative of my Predecessor, Benedict XV.

From the beginning, the Emperor Charles conceived of his office as a holy service to his people. His chief concern was to *follow the Christian vocation to holiness also in his political actions*. For this reason, his thoughts turned to social assistance. May he be an example for all of us, especially for those who have political responsibilities in Europe today!

7. Let us praise and thank the Lord with the entire Church for the marvels he has worked through these good and faithful servants of the Gospel. May Mary Most Holy, who in this month of October we invoke in a special way with the prayer of the Rosary, help us to become in turn generous and

courageous apostles of the Gospel. Amen!

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