



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Friday, 5 July 1996

Dear Sisters,

1. It gives me great joy to welcome the participants in the General Chapter of the *Missionary Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit*. I greet the newly elected Superior General, Sister Agada Brand, and I send an affectionate greeting to all the members of the Congregation, which for over a hundred years has borne dynamic witness to the value and fruitfulness in the Church of the *specifically missionary vocation*.

In the Lord's vineyard, the Servants of the Holy Spirit form a living, robust tree now present in almost 40 countries in different parts of the world. You are nourished by the very holiness of your Founders: Blessed Arnold Janssen and Blessed Maria Helena Stollenwerk. Only last year I had the joy of beatifying Maria Helena Stollenwerk, a remarkably gifted woman whose obedience to the Holy Spirit and devotion to the Eucharist provided the inspiration she needed for the work to which God called her in founding your Institute, entirely committed to the ideal of missionary service.

2. As required by your Constitutions, you are examining the state of the Congregation and seeking ways of increasing your fidelity to your founding charism, especially as regards living your religious and missionary vocation in community. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Vita Consecrata*" contains many reflections which are particularly suited to your experience. Your spirituality is specifically Trinitarian, and the Exhortation speaks at length of *the evangelical counsels as a gift of the Trinity*. Your vocation draws its vitality from your faith in the Triune God who dwells in your hearts. Your *community life* is rooted in that same sublime mystery; indeed, the very purpose of that life is "to extend in history the gifts of communion proper to the three divine Persons" (Ioannis

Pauli PP. II *Vita Consecrata*, 41). Your *missionary vocation* too springs from the same source: "Those who love God... cannot remain indifferent to the fact that many men and women do not know the full manifestation of God's love in Christ. The result, in obedience to Christ's commandment, is the missionary drive *ad gentes*" (*Ibid.* 77).

3. You have wished to have this meeting with the Successor of Peter for no other reason than to be confirmed in your faith and in your complete dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting in your serene, mature and Gospel-centered vision of your religious consecration, I invite the Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit to respond generously to the concern which was at the heart of the Synod on the consecrated life: "To tend towards holiness: this is in summary the programme of every consecrated life, particularly in the perspective of its renewal on the threshold of the Third Millennium" (*Ibid.* 93).

Dear Sisters, this is my wish for all the members of your Congregation. May the Holy Spirit continue to pour out his gifts on all of you. May he kindle in the hearts of the young people you serve a readiness to respond to the call to the consecrated missionary life.

I renew to you my prayerful support and I express my earnest hope that you will continue to love and serve the Church with all your personal and community resources. "Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things"! (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Vita Consecrata*, 110) As a pledge of peace and joy in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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