



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME
FOR THE BEATIFICATION
OF SIX SERVANTS OF GOD**

Monday, 15 April 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. On the day after the proclamation of the six new Blessed, I am happy to meet again with all of you who have come to Rome to participate in this solemn ecclesial celebration. In this festive climate, in accord with the joyful spirit of Easter, once more we wish to linger in contemplation of the wonderful works that the Lord accomplished in the life and activity of the new Blessed: [Gaetano Errico](#), [Lodovico Pavoni](#), [Luigi Variara](#), [María Romero](#), [Artemide Zatti](#), and [María del Tránsito Cabanillas de Jesús Sacramentado](#). We want to gain a deeper appreciation of their spirituality and their example to follow them on their generous path to holiness.

2. I address you, Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to those who share with you the joy for the beatification of [Gaetano Errico](#), apostle of the merciful love of God and martyr of the confessional.

How great a need is there in our time for those who will proclaim God's gentleness and forgiveness toward sinners, particularly through the Sacrament of Penance. In the secret of the confessional a great mystery is entrusted to priests as I wished to confirm in the Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday. I wrote then: "The Good Shepherd, through the presence and voice of the priest, approaches each man and woman, entering into a personal dialogue which involves listening, counsel, comfort and forgiveness" (n. 9).

To oppose the Jansenists who insisted too much on the justice of God and spread fear and anxiety in souls, Gaetano Errico insisted on proclaiming divine mercy. He never tired of exhorting

priests: "If souls come who are full of serious sins, encourage them to get up again, urge them to confidence, tell them that the Lord pardons everything, if they repent from the heart". Even today how strongly does God's merciful love speak to the heart of the human person, encouraging him to overcome evil, suffering, injustice and sin.

3. My warm greetings go to you, Sons of Mary Immaculate, who rejoice with the whole Church for the Beatification of your Founder, *Lodovico Pavoni*. Following the age-old tradition of Brescia, the new Blessed knew how to develop a method of education that is based on the means of preventive pedagogy such as religion and reason, love and gentleness, vigilance and intelligence.

He succeeded in setting forth a method of instruction and preparation for work that anticipates modern professional schools, introducing reforms that prophetically anticipated the social teaching of the *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII. What was the secret of such intense activity? He recalls it himself: "In a faith that is meditated on, the will and the heart find sure support for putting all our trust in God. A firm hope maintains true humility.... Charity burning in the heart makes us feel strongly the desires of God and the needs of our neighbour".

4. I am happy to greet the Italian pilgrims who have come to Rome for the Beatification of Don Luigi Variara and of the Salesian Brother, Artemide Zatti. I join the joy of the parishes of Viarigi, in the Diocese of Asti, and of Boretto, in the Diocese of Reggio Emilia, for the exaltation of the sons of their land.

5. Finally, I warmly greet the South American pilgrims, particularly from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia and Argentina, who came to participate with great joy in the solemn ceremony of the Beatification of Fr Luigi Variara, Sr María Romero, Artemide Zatti, all of them Salesians, and of Mother María del Tránsito Cabanillas de Jesús Sacramentado, Argentinian and Foundress of the Third Order Franciscan Missionaries.

Today the great Salesian family adds three new names to the legion of Salesian Saints and Blesseds.

Their lives were not hidden behind the walls of their religious community. Their lives appeared with all their works and reached the many men and women, children and youth who knew them and benefited from their apostolic activity based on the teachings of Don Bosco.

Fr Luigi Variara comes before us enriching the Salesian charism to which he was always faithful, by adding a new dimension as the Founder of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with the intention of being one who wipes away the tears of those who are the most marginalized and forgotten of our society. His life invites us to stretch out a hand to everyone, not to despise anyone, to welcome others. Today, Colombia, where he lived and gave the best of himself with the help of divine grace, can find in the example of this witness of Jesus Christ a help

to overcome the harsh situation it has been experiencing for many years and to move toward a more fraternal and united society.

6. The religious brother *Artemide Zatti* sowed in the soil of Viedma, with incessant and joyful activity in favour of the sick, the mercy that Jesus invited us to practice, "*I was sick and you visited me*" (Mt 25,36). His pleasant personality and his special expertise, together with an unlimited availability, won him the generous appreciation of his contemporaries. Today they have to live in a spirit of readiness to imitate his powerful example and foster in all those involved in the health profession a renewed attitude of service to the sick person who has to be respected in his status as person, with unalienable rights.

Sr María Romero's creative and affective service to the poor is what attracts us. The works that she founded to promote the Christian life of the neediest and to alleviate the state of need in which so many citizens of San José and its surrounding areas live on today and continue to give reason for hope to the neediest with their acts of solidarity for the poorest. May such service that gives great honour to the Church of Christ never be lacking.

7. The populous city of Cordoba, in Argentina, was the privileged witness of the holiness of life of Bl. *Mother María del Tránsito Cabanillas de Jesús Sacramentado*. Her life was a song of praise for God's wonders that take place in the ordinary events of daily life. Lacking any spectacular manifestation, the new Blessed travelled the path of holiness in each moment experiencing the closeness of Jesus and his invitation to follow him even to the last consequences.

Asking herself seriously about what God wanted from her, she discovered her Franciscan vocation and the inspiration for a plan of religious life that was busy helping women to realize themselves in the experience of faith. She knew how to be firm but patient and understanding as well, embrace the cross with all its difficulties and remain in humble silence even when great humiliations and criticisms hung over her. May her witness be an example for her compatriots who in the present hour have to follow with enthusiasm the life of Christians and citizens without falling into the temptation of discouragement or, what is worse, into a spirit of rivalry or revenge.

8. Dear Brothers and Sisters, what a wonderful company the Lord offers us in the new Blesseds. While we admire their example of holiness, let us make the effort to follow in their footsteps to be in turn courageous witnesses of the Gospel.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of all saints, guide and protect you on your route. May my Blessing go with you, which I warmly impart to those present, to your families and the communities you come from and to your loved ones.
