



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF
THE DIVINE REDEEMER**

Sunday, 20 March 1988

Dear Sisters,

1. I am pleased that, during this centenary year of the foundation of your Religious Congregation, I have been able to visit Salvator Mundi Hospital and your Generalate house. It is a special joy for me to be with you. Having already spoken about the mission of your medical facility, I now have the pleasure of addressing a few words to you, the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer.

The celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of your Institute is an occasion which evokes in the hearts of us all deep gratitude and praise for the loving providence of God. At the same time, it makes us mindful of the special role you fulfil in the mission of the Church.

2. "The Church has been divinely sent to all nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation'. Acting out of the innermost requirements of her own catholicity and in obedience to her Founder's mandate, she strives to proclaim the Gospel to all people". These words of the Second Vatican Council taken from the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, express well the universal nature of the Church's mission in the world, which was a primary concern of the Council.

Of course, this concern for proclaiming the Gospel to all the nations did not begin with the Council. It has been the Church's principal task from the beginning. The first words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew make clear what he expects of his followers: "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".

3. The founders of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour were inspired by this same apostolic zeal and universal spirit. From the beginning, Father Francis Mary of the Cross and Blessed Mary of the Apostles fixed their eyes steadily on the person of Jesus and, meditating on the deeds and words of our Divine Saviour, were filled with a burning desire to make him known and loved in every country on earth.

With this universal love and clear vision they began your Institute on December 8, 1888. Within a few years of the founding at Tivoli, some of your Sisters were already in India, in the Apostolic Prefecture of Assam. And soon they were going to other continents and many other countries, serving in a variety of apostolic activities, but always with the same ultimate goal: to make our Divine Saviour known and loved.

4. Dear Sisters: how clearly one can see the hand of divine Providence guiding your Institute in the course of the past hundred years. It has been a century of expansion and growth, a century of generosity and dedication, a century of countless achievements through God's abundant grace and overflowing mercy. With Sisters of twenty-five nationalities, representing a great number of diverse languages and cultures, you like the Church herself, are a kind of sacrament of the universal love of God. You bear public witness to the mercy of God which was most fully manifested in the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

In the secret recesses of the heart, each of you has heard the Lord say to her:

“Fear not, I have redeemed you; / I have called you by name, / you are mine”.

And then, because of the experience of having been loved by Christ with an everlasting love, you are able, indeed you are ready and eager, to share this Good News with others. This is the secret source of religious life. It is the foundation of that particular consecration you made by your vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. It is this experience of the excelling love of Christ which inspired your founders a century ago and which has sustained your Sisters and yourselves ever since. May Christ's love always be the focal point of your lives.

May I close with the words which I spoke to members of your General Chapter five years ago? They express my hope and prayer for you in this Jubilee Year: “Never forget the honour that is yours: to bear the title of the Divine Saviour. In union with Jesus, do everything you can to bring this salvation to the world”.

To you and to all the members of your Institute I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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