



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME FOR THE CANONIZATION
OF JOSEPH MARELLO, PAULA MONTAL FORNÉS
OF ST. JOSEPH OF CASALANZ, LEONIE FRANCES
DE SALES AVIAT AND MARIA CRESCENZIA HÖSS**

Monday 26 November 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am very pleased to meet you again, the day after the solemn canonization of Joseph Marello, Paula Montal Fornés of St Joseph of Calasanz, Leonie Frances de Sales Aviat and Maria Crescenza Höss. Today's meeting gives us the opportunity to prolong the thanksgiving we addressed to the Lord yesterday. At the same time, we can reflect a little longer in contemplation of the shining witness of these exemplary disciples of Christ.

I cordially greet the Cardinals, as well as the civil authorities who have wished to be present at this festive event. I offer a special "thank you" to the bishops and priests who have led the groups of pilgrims.

2. The first to rejoice in the canonization of Joseph Marello are his spiritual sons, the Oblates of St Joseph, whom I warmly greet and congratulate. Eight years have passed, dear friends, since I proclaimed your beloved founder Blessed in the *Campo del Palio* of Asti. Another miraculous sign - the cure of two children in Peru - has made it possible on this earth to crown his journey of holiness. This meaningful event has occurred just after the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, dedicated precisely to the ministry of the bishop in the Church and in the world today.

I greet warmly the pilgrims from Asti and from Acqui, cities that had him as priest and bishop respectively, and I greet all the communities, all over the world, where the Oblates and their mission have providentially arrived. Together with you all, sons and followers of St Joseph Marello,

I would like to praise the glorious St Joseph, Patron of the universal Church. Young Marello's deep love for the Virgin Mary prompted him to choose St Joseph as his model of life and guide in following Christ. And this sums up the message that he left to all Christians - religious, families, priests - love the Mother of the Redeemer and imitate her Guardian.

3. I now warmly greet the bishops, priests and faithful who have come for the canonization of *Mother Paula Montal Fornés* and, in particular, the Daughters of Mary, Sisters of the Pious Schools, as well as the Piarist Fathers and their students and the large group of alumni of the Calasanz family.

The new saint is a person you know well and admire; and so you wanted to be in Rome for yesterday's solemn ceremony. Now, with her canonization, St Paula Montal is held up to the whole Church as model and intercessor. Her spiritual profile shows us a person who trusted in God and consecrated herself to him, collaborating with his plan of salvation, especially through her mission of teaching. She was a mystic rooted in action, dedicated to carrying out properly a task at the service of the Church and of the world. In the concrete circumstances of her time that were far from easy, she intuited the role of women in the family and in society and dedicated herself to an ideal: the human and Christian education of women.

Her message is very much up to date. In this regard, I am pleased to recall what she writes in one of her letters: "We are bound to seek the tranquillity and progress of society that are only possible with a transparent life, which is the life God asks us to live". Through her intercession, may today's world travel on these paths that require Christian teachers who can transmit the values of the Gospel competently and with the witness of their lives to the children and young people of today who are called to be the leaders of tomorrow.

4. Dear pilgrims, your presence shows your attention to the ever current charism of *St Frances de Sales Aviat*, foundress of the Congregation of Sisters Oblates of St Francis de Sales, whose Superior General, Sr Frances Isabelle Stiegler I greet; I also greet Bishop Stenger of Troyes and Bishop Louis of Châlons, the dioceses where Leonie was born and lived, as well as the members of the civil institutions of the region.

Teachers and educators who with the Oblate Sisters guarantee a mission and thus render an indispensable service to young people in many of the world's regions, I encourage you to continue this educational task, to pass on to young people, through an integral formation and the witness of your life, the human and Christian values they need for their growth. Dear Sisters, I give thanks for your beautiful vocation that combines contemplation and action. Your desire to live daily life with love already has a missionary orientation. Do not let yourselves be discouraged by difficulties, of which Mother Aviat said: "They are always the means that God gives us to reach him!".

Following her example, may you be able to witness to the joy of giving yourselves to Christ, glad

"to be of service to Our Lord, joyful to win souls for him, and joyful ... to teach them renouncement and self-control"! I impart an affectionate Apostolic Blessing to you all.

5. With great joy I welcome the German faithful who have come on the occasion of this canonization. I greet especially Cardinal Friedrich Weter and Bishop Viktor Josef Dammertz, who have led the pilgrimage to to the Eternal City.

St Maria Höss is a great gift. You must be proud of this woman. She is an attractive person for the city of Kaufbeuren, and for the Diocese of Augsburg, for the Ecclesiastical Province of München und Freising and for the whole Church of Germany.

Although we are distant from her in time, nevertheless the new saint speaks to us at the beginning of the third millennium.

Every day, people of various creeds praying at her tomb entrust their concerns to her. Already in her lifetime Maria Crescenzia Höss reminded people of the one whom we all need: the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit can work great things in our lives and throughout the Church if we allow him to do so. With this hope, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all who have brought their resolutions to Rome.

6. Dear friends, once again, through these four new saints, the Church is pointing out to us and calling us to the high standard of ordinary Christian living: holiness. Holiness that consists not in doing exceptional tasks, but in living ordinary things in an extraordinary way, that is, as lovingly as possible. Returning to your usual occupations, treasure this teaching, learned at the school of Mary and of these saints. Thus you will experience a reflection of eternal bliss, which God promises to his faithful in the heavenly kingdom.

With these wishes, which I accompany with prayer, I cordially renew my Blessing to you.