



The Holy See

BEATIFICATION OF SIX SERVANTS OF GOD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

St Peter's Square

Third Sunday of Easter, 25 April 2004

1. "*They knew it was the Lord*" (Jn 21: 12): this is how the evangelist John expresses the reaction of the disciples' joy in recognizing the Risen Lord. Jesus manifests himself to them after a night of hard and unprofitable work on the Sea of Tiberias. Trusting in his word, they cast their nets into the water and haul to the shore a "[large] quantity of fish" (Jn 21: 6).

Like the Apostles, we too remain in amazement before the wealth of wonder that God accomplishes in the heart of those who confide in him. In today's Eucharistic Celebration, we contemplate what he has achieved in six new Blessed: in the priest [Augusto Czartoryski](#); in four women religious: [Laura Montoya](#), [María Guadalupe García Zavala](#), [Nemesia Valle](#), [Eusebia Palomino Yenes](#); and in a laywoman, [Alexandrina Maria da Costa](#). These are eloquent examples of how the Lord transforms the existence of believers when they trust in him.

2. "How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, God of hosts. My soul is longing and yearning, is yearning for the courts of the Lord.... One day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere" (Ps 84[83]: 2, 11).

Blessed [Augusto Czartoryski](#) wrote these words of the Psalm, his motto of life, on the holy card of his first Mass. In them is contained the rapture of a man who, following the voice of the call, discovers the beauty of the ministerial priesthood. In them resounds the echo of the different choices that the person who is discerning God's will and wishes to fulfil it must make. Augusto Czartoryski, a young prince, carefully prepared an effective method to discern the divine plan. In prayer, he presented to God all questions and deep perplexities, and then in the spirit of obedience he followed the counsel given by his spiritual guides. In this way he came to

understand his vocation and to take up the life of poverty to serve the "least". The same method enabled him throughout the course of his life to make decisions, so that today we can say that he accomplished the designs of Divine Providence in a heroic way.

I would like to leave this example of holiness especially to young people, who today search out the way to decipher God's will relating to their own lives and desire to faithfully forge ahead each day according to the divine word. My dear young friends, learn from Blessed Augusto to ask ardently in prayer for the light of the Holy Spirit and wise guides, so that you may understand the divine plan in your lives and are able to walk constantly on the path of holiness.

3. *"Just after daybreak Jesus was standing on the shore, though none of the disciples knew it was Jesus"* (Jn 21: 4).

It is possible for a person not to know the Lord, notwithstanding his numerous manifestations in the course of history. Mother Laura Montoya, seeing how many indigenous persons far away from urban centres lived without knowing God, decided to found the *Congregation of the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and St Catherine of Siena*, with the aim of bringing the light of the Gospel to the inhabitants of the forests.

This Blessed Colombian considered herself as mother to the Indians, to whom she wanted to show God's love. Her times were not easy ones, since the social tensions bloodied even then her noble Country. Taking inspiration from her message of peace, let us ask today that the beloved Nation of Colombia may soon enjoy peace, justice and holistic progress.

4. In the Gospel reading we heard the threefold question of Jesus to Peter: *"Do you love me?"*. Christ addresses this same question to men and women of all times. Christians must decisively and readily respond to the projects that he has for each one of us. Such was the life of the Mexican Blessed Guadalupe García Zavala, who, by giving up matrimony, dedicated herself to serving the poorest, the sick and the needy; she founded for this the *Congregation of the Handmaids of St Margaret Mary and the Poor*.

With deep faith, unlimited hope and great love for Christ, Mother "Lupita" sought her own sanctification beginning with love for the Heart of Christ and fidelity to the Church. In this way she lived the motto which she left to her daughters: *"Charity to the point of sacrifice and perseverance until death"*.

5. *"Manifest God's love to the little, to the poor, to every person in every corner of the earth"*: this was the undertaking of Blessed Nemesia Valle throughout her entire life. She left this teaching especially to her Sisters, the Sisters of Charity of St Joan Antida Thouret, and to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Turin. It is the example of a shining holiness directed towards the high summits of evangelical perfection, which can be translated in the simple gestures of daily living, completely

spent in God's service.

The new Blessed continues to repeat to all of us: *"Holiness does not consist in doing many things or great things.... Those who entirely spend themselves each day, wherever they are, for the Lord, are holy"*.

6. The Lord says to Peter in a decisive and penetrating way: *"Follow me"*. Sr Eusebia Palomino, of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, also heard God's call one day and answered by way of an intense spirituality and a profound humility in daily life. As a good Salesian, she was enlivened by love for the Eucharist and for the Blessed Virgin. Loving and serving were important for her; the rest did not matter, faithful to the Salesian maxim: *"da mihi animas, caetera tolle"*.

With the radicalness and constancy of her choices, Sr Eusebia Palomino Yenes traced out an attractive and demanding path of holiness for us all, especially for the young people of our time.

7. *"Do you love me?"*, Jesus asks Simon Peter, who replies: *"Yes Lord, you know that I love you"*. The life of Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa can be summarized in this dialogue of love. Permeated and burning with this anxiety of love, she wished to deny nothing to her Saviour. With a strong will, she accepted everything to demonstrate her love for him. A "spouse of blood", she relived mystically Christ's passion and offered herself as a victim for sinners, receiving strength from the Eucharist: this became her only source of nourishment for the final 13 years of her life.

With the example of Blessed Alexandrina, expressed in the trilogy "suffer, love, make reparation", Christians are able to discover the stimulus and motivation to make "noble" all that is painful and sad in life through the greatest evidence of love: sacrificing one's life for the beloved.

Secret of holiness: love for Christ

8. *"Yes Lord, you know that I love you"* (Jn 21: 15). Like Peter, like the Apostles on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, these new Blesseds also made their own this simple profession of faith and love, living it to the extreme. Love for Christ is the secret of holiness!

Dear brothers and sisters, let us follow the example of these Blesseds, offering as they did a coherent witness of faith and love in the living and working presence of the Risen One!

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