



# The Holy See

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## **MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II**

### **TO THE SISTERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS**

#### **OF ST JOSEPH OF CABURLOTTO** *Dear Sisters of the Institute of the Daughters of St Joseph of Caburlotto!*<sup>1</sup>. I

greet you affectionately on the occasion of the 23rd General Chapter of your congregation. The Chapter is being held on the eve of the Year 2000, which will mark the 150th anniversary of your religious family's foundation. On this occasion I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to you for the apostolic service you carry out in the Church. At the same time I would like to take the opportunity to reflect with you on your mission, against the background of the experience gained over the years. My grateful thoughts turn first of all to your venerable founder, Mons. Luigi Caburlotto, whose heroic virtues I recognized in the decree of 2 July 1994. In difficult times, he let himself be guided by the Gospel call to become an educator, a father to children and young people suffering from poverty and neglect. Experience had taught him how important education and schooling also were for the sake of evangelization. He therefore devoted himself with tireless zeal to founding popular schools and formation institutes, all the while collaborating with public institutions.<sup>2</sup> Faithful to your founder's mandate, you have chosen as the theme of your reflections at the next Chapter: "*Foundational Charism and Rule of Life*". You thus intend to review your spiritual, pedagogical and missionary patrimony, inherited from more than a century of past history, in the light of the Church's Magisterium. Social conditions in the countries where you work, the crisis of vocations, problems connected with school legislation and the education of minors require you to undertake a profound review in terms of formation, mentality, language and apostolic choices. Looking at the road you have traveled, you feel the need to thank God for the good accomplished by your institute and for the apostolic fruits that have enriched the seasons of its history. At the same time, your awareness of today's challenges spurs you to reflect on and systematically study your Constitutions, Spiritual Directory and Normative Directory in order to recover the full force of your institute's characteristic spirituality. In this regard, it will be valuable to read your venerable founder's writings, a patrimony which belongs to all the sisters and is a sure guide for the future.

3. With this Chapter you are preparing to take another very important step: rewriting your Rule of Life, while obediently listening to the voice of the Magisterium, which recognizes the charism of founders. Your founder's particular experience of the Spirit has been handed down to you so that it might be continually developed in docile adherence to the Church's directives and with careful analysis of the signs of the times. In fact, this precious heritage takes the form of a specific way of living the evangelical counsels, a concrete style of spiritual life, a particular form of apostolate, a characteristic community experience and a specific involvement in the world.

Your religious family, having developed an ever greater awareness of its apostolic identity, now intends to give new expression to the radicalism of its origins. In this perspective, at the General

Chapter you have decided to draft a new version of your Rule of Life, which will bring out more clearly the apostolic features of the Daughters of St Joseph of Caburlotto for the third millennium.

I ardently hope that this effort will result in an ever more organic presentation of the spiritual, community and apostolic elements of your specific charism. In particular, you will not fail to make an explicit reference to the mystery of the Incarnation contemplated at Nazareth, from which stems your characteristic "devotion of the heart", summing up your specific style of prayer.

4. On the occasion of this meeting, I would like to address a word of cordial encouragement to you all, Daughters of St Joseph of Caburlotto. May you live and offer your religious consecration as something good for the human person, by showing at every moment a radical fidelity to your educational charism. May each of you have a profound missionary openness to support your sisters who are involved on the frontiers of the mission *ad gentes*. Pray unceasingly that the Lord will send many holy vocations to the institute. May your prayer be strengthened by the offering of daily trials. I am thinking especially of your elderly and infirm sisters who, by their suffering, are a precious spiritual support for the congregation.

May the constant love that flows from Christ's heart reign among you, sisters of various backgrounds and ages. May you always be an eloquent sign of this divine love in your life and daily activities. Never turn your gaze from Christ, who in his paschal mystery reveals the heavenly Father's mercy to us. To each one he says again: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine" (Is 43:1). And then, having experienced that you are loved by him with a boundless love, be ready and eager to share this same spiritual treasure with others. May the love of Christ, which inspired your founder 150 years ago and has sustained you and your sisters until now, always be the centre of your life.

May Mary, the heavenly Mother of God and of the Church, protect you and make the work of your General Chapter fruitful. For my part, I assure you of a constant remembrance in my prayer, as I gladly bless your Mother General, the capitulars and all the religious of your institute.

*From the Vatican, 30 June 1999.*

**JOHN PAUL II**