



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE SAVIOUR**

Friday 19 March 1999

*Dear Father Hoffman,
Salvatorian Priests,
Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Friends in Christ,*

I am most pleased to be with you, the *members of the Society of the Divine Saviour*, and I thank Fr Hoffman for his kind words of welcome. In the love of the Redeemer I greet you all: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:7).

Today, we make a brief pause in our Lenten journey as we celebrate the Solemnity of St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and patron of the universal Church. Reflecting on Joseph's attitude of loving care and protection towards Mary and the Child Jesus provides a kind of framework for my visit to you this afternoon. In fact, similar sentiments were present in your founder, Fr Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, at whose tomb I have just prayed: for he was filled with devotion for the Mother of our Lord and zeal for Christ and his Church. It was precisely this zeal and devotion which led Fr Jordan, on returning to Rome after a journey to the Holy Land, to pronounce religious vows with two other priests and to take the name Francis Mary of the Cross. Thus was the Society of the Divine Saviour born, and it has since grown, bringing the grace-filled work of its apostolate to every continent.

It now falls to you, dear brothers and sisters, to continue Fr Jordan's vision of making Christ known as the Saviour of the World. Yes, on the eve of the third Christian millennium modern men and women have a greater need than ever of this knowledge, of this truth which will set them free (cf. Jn 8:32): "This is eternal life: that they may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent" (cf. Jn 17:3). Through the witness of your commitment, through the example of your unbounded generosity and love - like that shown by St Joseph and by your own founder - the world will be freed more and more from its bondage to sin and death, the Gospel will be proclaimed with greater

enthusiasm and power, faith will increase and the Church herself will grow in holiness and grace. These are the unfailing results of spending one's life so that others may have faith and hope.

And so, as is particularly fitting on this day dedicated to the memory of our Lord's foster-father, I invoke upon all Salvatorians the protection of St Joseph. Through his powerful intercession I pray: may you continue to bear eloquent and faithful witness to the charism of Fr Francis Mary of the Cross; may you be filled with intense love for Christ and his Church and with great devotion for our Blessed Mother; may your lives of selfless service - especially among young people and in the missions - inspire others to embrace the faith ever more fully, so that they may "hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:28; cf. Mt 1:24).

May the abundant blessings of almighty God be with you always!