



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE LITTLE MISSIONARY SISTERS**

*Saturday, 15 May 1999*

*Dear Little Missionary Sisters of Charity,*

At the end of your Ninth General Chapter, you have wished to meet the Successor of Peter to confirm the fidelity to the Church of each of you and of your entire religious family, according to the spirit of your founder, Bl. Luigi Orione.

Thank you for this visit and for the meaning that it is intended to express. I extend my sincere congratulations to Sr Maria Ortensia Turati, confirmed for the next six years as the head of your institute. I wish her, as well as the new General Council, fruitful apostolic service in leading the congregation to ever deeper and greater initiatives of charity.

During your Chapter meeting, which ends today, you paused to reflect on the theme: "*Rooted in Christ towards a new unity of life, for a more missionary institute*". I am aware that these days of intense prayer, careful reflection and fraternal dialogue have allowed you to look ahead, beyond the threshold of the third millennium, to emphasize the expectations and needs that call for generous and prophetic answers following the example of charity left by Don Orione.

In order for your work, which has now spread to many countries in the world, to advance according to its own charism, you must first of all remain firmly "rooted" in Christ. How can we not look to Don Orione and his example of unceasing union with Jesus, adored in the Eucharist, loved in the mystery of his Cross and served with tireless devotion in the poorest of the poor? Be faithful to Christ in the footsteps of Don Orione! May Christ be the centre of your heart and of all your noble projects. You will thus be missionaries of his Gospel of charity wherever you work, and will share with those around you the salutary balm of divine mercy.

Your charism calls you to be Missionaries of Charity, that is, apostles of God who is Love. In order to fulfil this challenging mission, let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit to an ever deeper unity with God and one another: this is an essential condition for carrying out an apostolate that is always courageous and faithful. By constant prayer and contemplation you draw light and strength to be authentic "*Little Missionary Sisters of Charity*". Poor, little and humble, as Don Orione

wished, so that you can indeed share the condition of those who are on the fringes of society. You are prepared, however, and well formed so that you can respond effectively to the spiritual and social challenges of our times.

Constant cooperation with the Sons of Divine Providence in the name of your common founder, openness to the laity, which you rightly intend to intensify in order to extend your range of activity, a formation attentive to the changing needs of our age, a permanent and organic involvement in the local Churches, will truly make your institute "more missionary" with works of preferential love for the poor, in the desire of leading them to meet Christ.

Dear sisters, I assure you of my prayer to the Lord and I entrust every decision and action taken at the General Chapter to Our Lady, Mother of Good Counsel. May she guide your steps and support you in your efforts. From heaven may Don Orione watch over you and all the institutions of your praiseworthy congregation.

With these wishes, I cordially bless you, your sisters, especially those who are ill and suffering, the aspirants and novices, your families and all who are the object of your care.