



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME FOR THE BEATIFICATION

Monday, 30 April 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. With great joy I greet and welcome you who have come to Rome to honour the new blessed: *Manuel González García, Marie-Anne Blondin, Caterina Volpicelli, Caterina Cittadini, Carlos Manuel Cecilio Rodríguez Santiago*. You represent many nations, almost as if to reflect the spreading of the witness of these generous disciples of Christ which, by the grace of God, knows no bounds. In fact, the Church fully expresses her universal mission when she speaks the language of *holiness* and especially when she must adopt this language in the contemporary age, in which the Spirit spurs her to a renewed proclamation of the Gospel in every corner of the earth.

2. I affectionately greet the Spanish Bishops and pilgrims who have joyfully participated in the beatification of Bishop *Manuel González García*, known as "the Bishop of the deserted tabernacles", founder of the *Misioneras Eucarísticas de Nazaret* (Eucharistic Missionaries of Nazareth) and of various institutes whose aim is to spread devotion to the Eucharist.

His life was that of a Pastor totally dedicated to his ministry, using every means within his reach: preaching, the publication of writings, the promotion of institutions to encourage Christian life and, above all, the witness of an extraordinary life, whose message continues to be profoundly up to date. Indeed, our lives would be missing something essential if we did not first of all contemplate the face of Christ (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 16). What better way to contemplate the Lord than to adore him and love him in the Sacrament of his real presence *par excellence* ? Devotion to the Eucharist is the centre that strengthens all Christian life since the faithful, responding to the Lord's request: "remain here, and watch with me" (Mt 26: 38), find in him the strength, comfort, firm hope and ardent love that come from the Lord's mysterious and hidden, but real, presence.

I therefore encourage you all to imitate the new blessed in his assiduous contact with the Lord in

the Blessed Sacrament, presenting to him the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1). At the same time, I encourage the *Misioneras Eucarísticas de Nazaret* to continue to be faithful to the founder's charism, inviting the men and women of today to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, present in the sacrament.

3. I would now like to greet Cardinal Luis Aponte Martínez, Archbishop emeritus of San Juan and the other Bishops of Puerto Rico who, accompanied by the authorities, priests and numerous pilgrims, took part in yesterday's ceremony for the beatification of *Carlos Manuel Rodríguez Santiago*, fondly known as "Charlie". Born in Caguas, he concluded his earthly mission at the age of 44, after a fruitful apostolic life, suffering sickness with great fortitude.

The life of this new blessed was that of a layman committed to spreading Christian humanism in the university world. He carried out his apostolic work at the Catholic University Centre, encouraging its members to live the present time in fidelity to the past and open to the future, fostering with the spread of Christian thought the perfect Christian balance between the natural and the supernatural, the ancient and the modern.

Puerto Rican lay people have found an example to imitate in this outstanding figure of your land, so close to us in time. Consequently, gathered in the "Circles" called after him and guided also by your Bishops, you promoted his cause. I am pleased at this initiative which culminated in yesterday's solemn ceremony. Now, officially held up as a model of holiness, he is also one of your countrymen who intercedes for you from heaven.

4. The life and apostolate of Mother *Marie-Anne Blondin* testify to her ability to let herself be taken over by Christ, to pass with him every day from death to life. From her intimacy with Christ, Mother Marie-Anne Blondin not only found her missionary zeal but also the prophetic strength to live Gospel forgiveness in daily life. The most sorrowful moments of her life would be transfigured by her desire to forgive incessantly in Christ's name, considering that there is more happiness in pardoning than in taking revenge. May Mother Marie-Anne Blondin's inspiring witness encourage the Church to bring peace to the world and to make herself close to life's injured persons, particularly in the fields of education, health care, and pastoral and social guidance, to bear witness to the love that God offers to every person and to proclaim his liberating forgiveness, which dissolves every reason for hatred and exclusion!

5. *Caterina Volpicelli* lived in Naples in the middle of the 19th century. She received a sound human and religious formation from her family and had the opportunity to meet several men of God such as Bl. Ludovico da Casoria, the Barnabite Leonardo Matera and Bl. Bartolo Longo, who deeply marked her spiritual development. Her heart expanded more and more, in proportion to the size of the Heart of Christ, whose fervent disciple and apostle she became, cultivating an intense Eucharistic life and the Apostleship of Prayer.

It was precisely with the first messengers of the Apostleship of Prayer that Caterina founded the *Istituto delle Ancelle del Sacro Cuore* (Institute of the Servants of the Sacred Heart), which, after being approved by the Archbishop of Naples, received the decree of praise from my predecessor, Leo XIII. With such a rich interior life, Caterina and her sisters made themselves "Good Samaritans" in various situations of poverty, not only carrying out a philanthropic and charitable work, but witnessing to genuine Gospel charity with simplicity and discretion, solidarity and respect for the simple and humble people. Her apostolic heritage is a very precious gift for the Church, for which we would like to thank the Lord. May this religious heritage be preserved and increased by her spiritual daughters.

6. I now address you, dear brothers and sisters, who are rejoicing in the beatification of *Caterina Cittadini*, with a special thought for the *Suore Orsoline di San Girolamo in Somasca* (Ursuline Sisters of Somasca), whom she founded.

The great insight of this distinguished daughter of the Bergamo region was that of having grasped the importance of school as a fundamental means for the formation of citizens and Christians. In this way she prophetically anticipated the directives of the Second Vatican Council, which in the Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis* on Catholic schools exhorts Catholics to "orient the whole of human culture to the message of salvation" (n. 8).

The pedagogical method worked out by the new blessed is based on personal acquaintance and direct relationship with the boarding-school girls. She herself points out to her teachers in the exhortation contained in the *Rule*: "Let them consider as a special benefit from God their involvement in a task that belongs to the angels, and let them consider themselves fortunate and unworthy of being employed in teaching school students; they should show the desire for their good, remembering that our Lord said: "Whatever you do for one of these little ones I consider as done for me" (Chap. XVI, 2).

I warmly hope, dear Ursuline Sisters of Somasca and all who are inspired by the spirituality and example of Caterina Cittadini, that you will continue faithfully on the path she marked out in order to be reliable guides on the journey of faith and the cultural formation of children and young people.

7. Dear brothers and sisters, your devout and festive presence, yesterday and today, have given greater ecclesial attention to the proclamation of the new blessed. May you yourselves be the first imitators of these brothers and sisters, whom the Church points out as models of Gospel life! Call upon them in prayer; study their witness and make it known; imitate their virtues. In the communion of saints, faith permits us to feel close to them, together with the Virgin Mary, Queen of all the saints, to whom I entrust you, together with your loved ones. With these sentiments, I bless you all.

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