



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GUANELLA FAMILY

Saturday, 30 October 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I welcome you with great joy and I thank you for this special visit at the end of the centenary celebrations of your presence in Rome.

I greet Fr Nino Minetti, Superior General of the Servants of Charity, and Sr Giustina Valicenti, Superior General of the Daughters of St Mary of Providence, whom I thank for her courteous words expressing your common sentiments. I then greet the representatives of the Guanellian Lay Movement, the friends of the Opera Don Guanella and of the Roman parish communities that are entrusted to the Guanellian Religious. I dedicate a special thought to the sick and to the persons with disabilities who are present.

2. A hundred years ago Blessed Luigi Guanella came to Rome with some of his collaborators, "to do a little bit of good for the benefit of our neighbour". Since then, dear members of his spiritual Family, you have not ceased to follow in his footsteps, faithful to the style of the Founder who liked to say: "One must do good well!". And still today, seeking to be "Good Samaritans" to the poor, you direct avant-garde institutions that respond to the changed demands of the times with a charitable apostolate in many different forms.

Then what shall we say about the care you devote to the terminally ill? Death and dying have always been a disturbing challenge to human beings. In founding the "Pious Union of the Passing of St Joseph" for the dying, Don Guanella was able to inspire continuous prayers to help all those on the point of crossing the threshold of eternal life.

3. You have learned from your blessed Founder that if you are to give love to our brothers and

sisters, you must draw it from the furnace of divine love by being in constant contact with Christ in prayer. You are motivated by that strong spirit of faith that used to prompt Don Guanella to say: "It is God who does, we are only instruments of Providence".

May the presence of his mortal remains in Rome in these days encourage you to imitate his virtues, to strive with all your might for that "high standard" of Christian living, which is holiness.

May the Virgin Mary protect and accompany you on this journey. As I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, I bless with affection all of you who are present here, and the whole of the Guanella Family.