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OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 160527b

Friday 27.05.2016

To the followers of St. Luigi Orione: servants of Christ and of the poor

Vatican City, 27 May 2016 – "The whole Church is called to follow with Jesus the paths of the world to encounter today's humanity which is in need, as Don Orione wrote, of 'the bread of the body and the divine balsam of faith'", said the Pope this morning as he received in audience the participants in the 14th General Chapter of the Little Work of Divine Providence (St. Luigi Orione), on the theme "Servants of Christ and of the Poor", and during which the new Superior General, Father Tarcisio Vieira, was elected.

To incarnate in current history the words of Don Orione, it is necessary to combine both the personal and apostolic dimensions of life, as the Orionines have been called and consecrated by God "to stay with Jesus and to serve Him in the poor and the excluded of society ... always keeping watch to ensure faith does not become ideology, charity is not reduced to philanthropy, and the Church does not end up as an NGO. Being servants of Christ qualifies all you are and all you do, guaranteeing your apostolic effectiveness and making your service fruitful", the Pope remarked, highlighting that their founder had urged them to seek out and treat the wounds of the people, to heal their sickness and to reach out to them morally and materially as in this way their action would be not only effective but also profoundly Christian and saving.

"I urge you to follow these directions, which are very true", he added. "In this way, you will not only imitate Jesus the good Samaritan, but you will also offer to the people the joy of encountering Jesus and the salvation He brings to all. Indeed, those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. The proclamation of the Gospel, especially in our times, requires great love for the Lord along with particular initiative. I have heard that while the Founder was still alone, in some places they called you 'the running priests', because they always saw you on the move, amid the people. ... Like Don Orione, I too exhort you not to remain closed up in your own spaces, but to reach out. There is a great need for priests and religious who do not stay only in their institutions of charity – necessary though they may be – but who also know how to go beyond these confines to take Christ's charity to all places, even the farthest."

"Your service to the Church will be more effective the more you apply yourselves to care for your personal closeness to Christ and to your spiritual formation. Bearing witness to the beauty of consecration, the good life of religious servants of Christ and of the poor, you will set an example to the young. Life generates life, and the holy and content religious inspires new vocations", concluded the Holy Father, before commending the

congregation to the maternal protection of Our Lady, whom the Orionines venerate as the "Mother of Divine Providence".
