



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO PILGRIMS WHO CAME FOR THE
BEATIFICATION LITURGY**

Monday, 10 November 1997

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,*

1. The hymn of joy and thanksgiving to God for the solemn liturgy of yesterday's beatification is renewed in our meeting today, when we wish to pause again to meditate on the example and teachings of the three new blessed. I sincerely greet all of you who honour them by your presence. I extend my greeting to your families, your communities and to the countries from which you come. Convey my cordial greeting to them all. For us these new blessed are bright beacons of hope which, in the communion of saints, illumine our daily journey on earth.

2. "*The Cross strengthens the weak and makes gentle the strong*". The motto chosen by the Hungarian Bishop and martyr *Vilmos Apor* is a wonderful synthesis of his spiritual journey and his pastoral ministry. Strengthened with the truth of the Gospel and with the love of Christ, he courageously raised his voice always to defend the weakest from violence and abuse.

During the difficult years of the Second World War he untiringly devoted himself to relieving the poverty and suffering of his people. His active love for the flock entrusted to him led him to make even the Bishop's palace available to the war evacuees, while he protected those most exposed to danger even at the risk of his own life.

His martyrdom, which took place on Good Friday of 1945, was the worthy crowning of a life totally marked by his intimate sharing in the Cross of Christ. May his Gospel witness be for you, dear brothers and sisters of Hungary, a constant encouragement to an increasingly greater dedication

in serving Christ and your fellow men.

3. Blessed *John Baptist Scalabrini* shines today as an example of a pastor with a sensitive and open heart. Through his wonderful work for the People of God, Bishop Scalabrini tried to lessen the material and spiritual wounds of his many brothers and sisters forced to live far from their homeland. He supported them in defending the human person's fundamental rights and he wished to help them to live the obligations of their Christian faith. As an authentic "Father of migrants" he worked to sensitize communities to offering a respectful, open and supportive welcome. He was convinced that, through their presence, migrants are a visible sign of the universality of the family of God and they can help create the indispensable bases for that authentic meeting of peoples which is the fruit of the Spirit of Pentecost.

I sincerely hope that his example may be a constant encouragement for all of you, dear pilgrims, who came here to pay homage to him. I cordially greet you. I especially greet you, *pilgrims of the Diocese of Piacenza-Bobbio*, who are present with your Bishop, Luciano Monari, and with Cardinals Ersilio Tonini and Luigi Poggi, natives of your land. May the apostolic service that the new blessed gave for many years in your Diocese continue to inspire your present commitment to the Christian life, so that the Gospel may always enlighten the steps of all believers.

A special word for *the Missionaries of St Charles*, the religious and lay people belonging to the spiritual family founded by the new blessed. By their presence in the Church and their apostolate among migrants, they continue the work of their Father and Teacher for the good of their many brothers and sisters who are migrants and refugees in various parts of the world.

4. I now cordially greet *the large group of faithful from the Diocese of Como*, who together with their Bishop, Alessandro Maggiolini, rejoice today for the beatification of a native of their region, Bishop Scalabrini. Dear people, your presence reminds me of the Pastoral Visit I had the joy of making to your diocesan community last year. During the days I spent in the Como area I was able to observe that in the city of Como, in the lake district and in Valtellina there is still a solid tradition of religious values and holiness. I am thinking especially of the first martyrs, Carpophorus and his companions, the first Bishops, Felix and Abundius, Pope Innocent XI, Bl. Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, Bl. Luigi Guanella, and Chiara Bosatta, without forgetting, lastly, Ven. Nicholas Rusca. This host of generous witnesses to Christ is joined today by this new blessed, who was rector of Como's St Abundius Seminary and parish priest of St Bartholomew's.

May this rich Christian tradition continue and be enriched with more and more faithful servants of Christ. To this end, allow yourselves to be formed by the Holy Spirit, to whom the Church devotes special attention during 1998, the second year of immediate preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. Your parish and local communities can thus carry out the task of evangelization with consistent apostolic fervour. May you be assisted by the patron saints of your Diocese and especially by Our Lady, whom you particularly venerate in the cathedral and in the shrines of Our

Lady of Help, of Gallivaggio and of Tirano.

5. I am pleased to welcome the Mexican pilgrims who, accompanied by their Bishops, have come to Rome from Guadalajara, cradle of the work of the new blessed, María Vicenta of St Dorothy Chávez Orozco, and from other Dioceses of this beloved country, to share the rich spiritual patrimony of this brave woman, born in the land of Mexico and called to give glory to the universal Church. "*Caritas Christi urget nos*" (2 Cor 5:14): the love of Christ impels us. This was Mother Vicentita's motto and distinctive mark. Her great love for Christ crucified drove her to give the best of herself to the suffering, living an authentic preferential option for the sick, the elderly and the poor. Demanding with herself and extremely gentle with others, she was able to incarnate the maternal and evangelizing face of the Church in hospital wards, teaching the sick that in suffering there is hidden a special power that brings man closer to Christ and becomes a source of peace and spiritual joy (cf. Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris*, n. 26).

Dear brothers and sisters, the extraordinary witness of this soul completely consecrated to the Triune God is an invitation to everyone, and especially to the Servants of the Holy Trinity and of the Poor, to live their Christian vocation with self-sacrifice and simplicity, thus making the spirit of the beatitudes present in the world.

May this new blessed intercede for the work of the forthcoming Special Assembly for America of the Synod of Bishops! May her holy example enliven the great challenge of the new evangelization, to which the whole Church is invited on the threshold of the third Christian millennium.

6. Dear brothers and sisters, when you return to your native communities, take with you the memory of these special days spent in Rome. By following in the footsteps of the new blessed, may each of you have an intense desire to respond ever more generously to the Lord's grace and to the universal call to holiness. To this end I invoke the heavenly protection of Our Lady and of Bl. Vilmos Apor, John Baptist Scalabrini and María Vicenta of St Dorothy Chávez Orozco, and I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you, to your families, to your communities and to all those who are dear to you.