



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE "TRA NOI" MOVEMENT**

*Friday, 8 March 2002*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. I am pleased to open the doors of this house and, even more so, those of my heart to each of you and to all the members of the *Tra Noi* Movement that has now spread well beyond the boundaries of Italy.

Welcome! I cordially greet you and especially Mrs Bianca Imperati, your President, Mrs Antonella Simonetta, who directs the Secular Institute of Mary of Nazareth, and the priests who take care of your spiritual formation. On this occasion I wish to mention the generous disciple of Bl. Don Luigi Orione, your founder, who died a short time ago, Fr Sebastiano Plutino. He spent his long life serving the poorest, spreading everywhere the spirit of welcome that is an important feature of your exemplary association.

Dear friends, today, with your visit to the Successor of Peter, you intend to renew your fidelity to the Church and commit yourselves to follow her teachings, with ever greater docility in order to be apostles of the new evangelization.

Our meeting is taking place providentially on the day [in Italy] dedicated to women. From the start you have dedicated yourselves to the human and religious protection and promotion of women and you know well how much remains to be done in this field. I take advantage of this occasion to express my spiritual closeness to women in difficulty and formulate the hope that they will always have willing supporters beside them so that they can realize their legitimate aspirations.

2. Fifty years have passed since Fr Sebastiano Plutino gathered a large group of domestic workers for the first time in a movement called "*Tra Noi*". Many of them belonged to the Santa Zita

Parish Association, that had been founded to offer a family atmosphere and Christian formation to young women who arrived in Rome from the poorer regions of Italy to undertake humble and laborious domestic work.

The new movement was inspired by the "Proclamation for a Better World" (*Proclama per un Mondo Migliore*), which Pius XII addressed to the Diocese of Rome on 10 February 1952. The Pontiff said: "It is a whole world that must be transformed from savage to human, from human to divine" (*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi*, 13 [1951-1952], p. 471). Fr Plutino held enthusiastically to this message, in fidelity to the teaching of Bl. Don Luigi Orione. As the years passed, the *Tra Noi* Movement continued to extend its radius of action to other Italian cities and to Brazil.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, as I thank the Lord who has made your work fruitful in five decades, I invite you to look confidently to the prospects for the future opening before you. Old and new social categories at risk and marginalized await your care. I am thinking, for example, of immigrants, elderly persons in difficulty and young people searching for wise guidance.

By spreading the "spirituality of welcome", you can become the architects of a real, universal brotherhood, in which each human being feels accepted without distinctions of social class, religion, culture and nationality. Do not offer only material acceptance to those you meet through your apostolate, but also an adequate religious formation.

With the "plan for families" and your active role in the Forum of Family Associations, you support family nucleuses so that they may be the living cells of a renewed world, the training ground for dialogue and acceptance. With the "plan for young people", that seeks to invigorate formation activities for adolescents, encourage an open and hospitable spirit among the new generations, motivating young people to be apostles among their peers and architects of the society of the future.

By giving the *Tra Noi* Movement the profile of a "family of families", you are involved in working increasingly to safeguard the indispensable human and Christian values that typify your history. In this way you can have an effective impact on social structures, giving a voice to those who do not have one. In a world threatened by self centred individualism, you should welcome those who feel isolated or at the mercy of events.

4. However, if your action is to be effective, you must first keep alive and intensify your daily contact with God by diligently listening to his word, in prayer and in an intense sacramental life. Only men and women of prayer can create an effective social apostolate. At the heart of all your activity, there should be the Eucharist, the inexhaustible source of communion and missionary zeal.

To renew the world and transform it "from savage to human, from human to divine" you must be

saints like Bl. Luigi Orione, who never failed to inspire Fr Sebastiano Plutino, articulating his love in useful options for the Church and for society.

May Mary, Salvation of the Roman People, the heavenly Mother and Patroness of the *Tra Noi* Movement, guide you and go with you. May she also support the Mary of Nazareth Secular Institute that, in sharing the same charism with you, like a leaven, is called to give life to every action of the movement. As I also assure you constant remembrance in the Lord as I wholeheartedly bless you.