



The Holy See

BEATIFICATION OF SIX SERVANTS OF GOD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Sunday 14 April 2002

1. *"Jesus himself drew near and went with them"* (Lk 24,15). As we have just heard in the Gospel, Jesus becomes a traveller joining the two disciples who were on their way to the village of Emmaus. He explained the meaning of the Scriptures to them and then, when they reached their destination, he broke the bread with them as he had done with the Apostles on the evening before his death on the cross. In that moment the disciples' eyes opened and they recognized him (cf. v. 31).

The experience of the Risen Lord at Emmaus is continually renewed in the Church. We can admire a wonderful example of the fact in the lives of those whom we have the joy of raising to the glory of the altars: the priests, [Gaetano Errico](#), [Lodovico Pavoni](#) and [Luigi Variara](#); the virgin [María del Tránsito Cabanillas de Jesús Sacramentado](#); the religious brother, [Artemide Zatti](#); the virgin, [María Romero Meneses](#).

As did the disciples of Emmaus, the new Blesseds knew how to recognize the living presence of the Lord in the Church and, overcoming difficulties and fears, became his enthusiastic and courageous witnesses before the world.

2. *"You were ransomed, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ"* (1 Pt 1,18-19). These words, taken from the second reading, make us think of Blessed [Gaetano Errico](#), priest and founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In an age defined by profound political and social change, in opposition to the spiritual rigorism of the Jansenists, Gaetano Errico proclaimed the greatness of the mercy of God, who always calls to

conversion those who live under the dominion of evil and sin. True martyr of the confessional, the new Blessed spent entire days giving his best energies to welcoming and listening to penitents. By his example, he urges us to rediscover the value and importance of the Sacrament of Penance, where God distributes his pardon so generously and shows the gentleness of the Father towards his weaker children.

"*This Jesus God has raised him up and of that we are all witnesses*" (Acts 2,32). The interior consciousness, that became a burning and invincible faith, guided the spiritual and priestly experience of Lodovico Pavoni, priest, Founder of the Congregation of the Sons of Mary Immaculate.

Gifted with a particularly sensitive spirit, he was totally given over to the care of poor and abandoned youngsters and even deaf-mutes. His activity branched out in many directions, from that of education to the publishing sector, with original apostolic intuitions and courageous innovations. At the basis of everything, there was a solid spirituality. By his example, he exhorts us to place our confidence in Jesus and to be ever more immersed in the mystery of his love.

3. "*And beginning with Moses and the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*" (Lk 24,27). With these words of the Gospel, Jesus manifested himself as companion on the road of life and our patient Master, who knows how to warm the heart and enlighten the mind so that it can understand God's plan. After the supper with Him, the disciples of Emmaus, leaving behind their sadness and confusion, ran back to the newly born Christian community to proclaim the joyful news of their having seen the Risen Lord.

This spirituality is common to the three new Blesseds who pursued sanctity under the inspiration of Don Bosco and the Salesian tradition. The raising to the altars of Don Luigi Variara, of Bro. Artemide Zatti, and of Sr María Romero is a great joy for this religious Family.

4. From Italy, and from the diocese of Asti, the Salesian Fr Luis Variara, went to Colombia, faithful follower of the merciful Jesus and close to the suffering. From the first moment of his arrival, he dedicated his youthful energy and his many gifts to the service of the lepers. The first Salesian priest to be ordained in Colombia, he succeeded in bringing together around him a group of consecrated women, some of whom were themselves lepers or the daughters of lepers and for this reason, not welcome in other religious orders. In time, this group became the Congregation of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a flourishing order that has houses in several countries.

Artemide Zatti, Salesian religious brother, left the diocese of Reggio Emilia with his family to seek a better life in Argentina, the land dreamt of by Don Bosco. There he discovered his Salesian vocation, which took the form of a passionate, competent and loving service to the sick. His almost fifty years in Viedma represent the history of an exemplary religious, careful to accomplish his

duties in his community and totally devoted to the service of those in need. May his example help us to be conscious of the presence of the Lord and bring us to welcome him in all our needy brothers and sisters.

Sister María Romero Meneses, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, knew how to reflect the face of Christ which he made her recognize in the sharing of the bread. Born in Nicaragua, she received her religious formation in El Salvador and passed the greatest part of her life in Costa Rica. Those beloved Central American peoples, united in the joy of her beatification, can find in the new Blessed who loved them so much, an abundance of example and teaching to renew and confirm their Christian life, deeply rooted in their countries.

With a passionate love for God and an unlimited confidence in the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sr María Romero was an exemplary religious, apostle and mother of the poor people, who were her real favourites. May her memory be a blessing for all and may the works she founded, among which the "House of the Virgin" in San José, continue in fidelity to the ideal that led to their being started.

5. "*Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?*" (Lk 24,32). This surprising confession of the disciples who first walked to Emmaus is what happened with the vocation of Mother María del Tránsito Cabanillas de Jesús Sacramentado, foundress of the Third Order Franciscan Missionaries and the first Argentinian woman to be beatified.

The flame that burned in her heart brought María del Tránsito to seek intimacy with Christ in the contemplative life. She was not deterred when on account of bad health she had to abandon the monasteries where she was living, but continued with a confidence and abandonment to the divine will which she followed on her constant quest. The Franciscan ideal then appeared as the true way that God wanted for her and, aided by wise directors, she undertook a life of poverty, humility, patience and charity, giving rise to a new religious family.

6. "*Show us Lord the path of life*" (response for the *Responsorial Psalm*). Let us make our own the invocation of the Responsorial Psalm, that we just sang. We need the Risen Redeemer to show us the road, to go with us on the road, and to guide us to full communion with the heavenly Father. Show us the path of life. Only you, Lord, can show us the *true path of life*, the only one who leads us to the goal, as you did for these Blessed persons who today are resplendent in the glory of Heaven.

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