



The Holy See

CANONIZATION OF 5 BLESSEDS

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Solemnity of Pentecost

Sunday, 19 May 2002

1. *"We hear them announcing in our own tongues the mighty works of God"* (Acts 2,11).

On the day of Pentecost, this is what the crowd of pilgrims "from every nation under heaven" exclaimed when they listened to the preaching of the Apostles.

On this day of Pentecost, we are filled with the same wonder, while we contemplate the great miracles worked by God in the lives of the five new saints raised to the glory of the altars: [Alphonsus of Orozco](#), a priest of the Order of St Augustine; [Ignatius of Santhiá](#), a priest of the Order of the Capuchin Franciscans; [Umile of Bisignano](#), a religious of the Order of Friars Minor; [Pauline of the Suffering Heart of Jesus](#), virgin foundress of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; [Benedetta Cambiagio Frassinello](#), religious, foundress of the Congregation of the Benedictine Sisters of Providence.

They travelled the highways of the world announcing and witnessing to Christ with their words and their lives. This is why they have become an eloquent sign of the perennial Pentecost of the Church.

2. *"Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven"* (Jn 20, 22-23).

With these words, the Risen One bestows on the Apostles the gift of the Spirit and with it the divine power to forgive sins. The Capuchin priest [Ignatius of Santhiá](#) lived uniquely the mission of forgiving sins and of guiding men and women on the paths of evangelical perfection. For the love of Christ and to advance more quickly in evangelical perfection he walked in the footsteps of the

Poverello of Assisi.

In the Piedmont of his time, Ignatius of Santhiá was father, confessor, counsellor and teacher of many - priests, religious and lay people - who sought his wise and enlightened guidance. Even today he continues to remind everyone of the values of poverty, simplicity and authentic Christian life.

3. "*Peace be with you*" (Jn 20,19.21), Jesus said on appearing to the Apostles in the Upper Room. Peace was the first gift of the Risen Christ to the Apostles. The worthy son of the noble region of Calabria, *Umile of Bisignano*, became the constant bearer of the peace of Christ which is also the principle that has to inspire social peace. He shared with Ignatius of Santhiá the same dedication to holiness in the spiritual school of St Francis of Assisi and, in his turn, offered a special witness of charity toward his neighbour.

In our society, in which all too often the traces of God seem to have vanished, Fra Umile is a joyful and encouraging invitation to meekness, kindness, simplicity, and a healthy detachment from the transient goods of this world.

4. "*To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*" (I Cor 12,7).

This is what happened in the life of *St Alphonsus of Orozco* of the Order of St Augustine. Born in the town of Oropesa, Toledo, religious obedience led him to pass through many Spanish cities and towns until he ended his days in Madrid. His pastoral dedication to serving the poorest in the hospitals and prisons makes him a model for all who, under the guidance of the Spirit, base their entire life on the love of God and of their neighbour, following the great commandment of Jesus.

5. The action of the Holy Spirit is revealed in a special way in the life and mission of *Mother Pauline*. He inspired her to build a home, with a group of young women friends, that was later called by the people the "Little Hospital of St Virgilius" and destined to provide material and spiritual assistance to the suffering and the marginalized. Thus in response to the plans of Providence, is born the first religious community in Southern Brazil: named the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. It was in this hospital that "being-for-others" became the guiding motive for *Mother Pauline*. In service to the poor and the suffering, she became a manifestation of the Holy Spirit who is "the best comforter; the soul's most welcome guest, sweet refreshment here below" (*Sequence*).

6. "*O most blessed Light, fill the interior of the hearts of your faithful*". The words of the Sequence are a beautiful summary of the life of *Benedetta Cambiagio Frassinello* and explain its extraordinary spiritual richness.

Guided by divine grace, the new saint was concerned to accomplish God's will with fidelity and

coherence. With boundless confidence in the Lord's goodness, she abandoned herself to his "loving Providence", deeply convinced, as she liked to repeat, that one must "*do everything for love of God and to please him*". This is the precious inheritance that St Benedetta Cambiagio Frassinello left to her spiritual daughters that today is offered to the entire Christian community.

7. "*Come, Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love*" (Gospel Acclamation).

Let us make our own this invocation of today's liturgy. The Holy Spirit radically transformed the Apostles who out of fear had locked themselves into the Upper Room, making them fervent heralds of the Gospel. Down through the ages, the Spirit continues to support the Church in her evangelizing mission, raising up in every age courageous witnesses to the faith.

With the Apostles, the Blessed Virgin Mary received the gift of the Spirit (cf. Acts 1,14). With her, and in communion with the new saints, let us also implore the miracle of a new Pentecost for the Church. For the humanity of our time let us ask an abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit, enkindle the hearts of your faithful! Help us to spread the fire of your love in the world. Amen!

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