



# The Holy See

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## VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO LORETO

CELEBRATION OF MASS

FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF:

PERE TARRÉS I CLARET,

ALBERTO MARVELLI

PINA SURIANO

### *HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II*

*Esplanade of Montorso*

*Sunday, 5 September 2004*

1. *For what man can learn the counsel of God?* (Wis 9: 13). The question asked in the Book of Wisdom has one answer: *only the Son of God*, made man for our salvation in the virginal womb of Mary, *can reveal God's design to us*. Jesus alone knows *which is the path* that "leads to wisdom of heart" (cf. *Responsorial Psalm*) and to peace and salvation. And what is this way? He has given us the answer in today's Gospel: *it is the way of the Cross*. His words are clear: "*Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple*" (Lk 14: 27). "*Carrying the cross, following Jesus*", means being prepared to make any sacrifice for love of him. It means not putting anything or anyone before him, not even those you love the most, not even your own life.

2. Dear brothers and sisters gathered in this "splendid valley of Montorso", as Archbishop Comastri has described it: I cordially thank him for his warm words to me. With him, I greet the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops who are here; I greet the priests, the men and women religious, the consecrated persons; and above all I greet you young people, members of Catholic Action, led by your General Chaplain, Mons. Francesco Lambiasi, and by the [Italian] National President, Dr Paola Bignardi, whom I thank for her warm address. You have desired to gather here, under the gaze of Our Lady of Loreto, to renew your commitment of *faithful attachment to Jesus Christ*. You know it: *adhering to Christ is a demanding decision*. It is not by chance that Jesus speaks of the "cross". However, he straightaway explains: "after me". These are the important words: *we are not alone in carrying our cross*. He walks ahead of us, showing us the way with the light of his example and the power of his love.

3. The cross accepted through love gives *birth to freedom*. The Apostle Paul experienced it when he was old "and now a prisoner also for Jesus Christ", as he himself says in his Letter to Philemon, but inwardly *totally free*. It is this impression that the

passage just proclaimed conveys to us: Paul is in chains but his heart is free, because it is filled with Christ's love. Therefore, in the dark prison in which he suffers for his Lord, he can speak of freedom to a friend who is outside it. Philemon was a Christian of Colossae; Paul turns to him to ask him to free Onesimus, who was still a *slave* according to the law of the time, but is henceforth a *brother* through baptism. By renouncing the other as a possession, Philemon will receive *the gift* of a brother. A clear lesson can be learned from this incident, viewed as a whole: there is no *greater love* than that of the cross; there is no *truer freedom* than that of love; there is no *more complete brotherhood* than that which is born from the Cross of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> The *three new Blesseds* were humble disciples and heroic witnesses of the Cross of Jesus. Pere Tarrés i Claret, first a doctor, then a priest, dedicated himself to the lay apostolate among the young people of Catholic Action in Barcelona, whose adviser he subsequently became. As a medical practitioner, he devoted himself with special concern *to the poorest of the sick*, convinced that "the sick person is a symbol of the suffering Christ". Ordained a priest, he devoted himself with generous daring to the tasks of his ministry, ever faithful to the commitment he had made on the eve of his Ordination: "A single resolution, Lord, cost what it may". He accepted with faith and heroic patience a *serious illness* from which he died at the age of only 45. Despite his suffering, he would frequently repeat: "How good the Lord is to me! And I am truly happy".<sup>5</sup> Alberto Marvelli, a young man who was strong and free and a generous son of the Church of Rimini and of Catholic Action, considered his brief life of only 28 years as a *gift of love to Jesus for the good of his brethren*. "Jesus has enfolded me in his grace", he wrote in his diary; "I no longer see anyone but him, I think only of him". Alberto had made the daily *Eucharist* the centre of his life. In *prayer* he also sought the inspiration for political commitment, convinced of the need *to live to the full as children of God in history* in order to make it a history of salvation. In the difficult time of the Second World War, which sowed death and multiplied violence and atrocious suffering, Bl. Alberto fostered an *intense spiritual life*, from which flowed the love for Jesus that led him constantly to forget himself and *to take on the cross of the poor*.<sup>6</sup> Bl. Pina Suriano, a native of Partinico in the Diocese of Monreale [Sicily], *loved Jesus with an ardent and faithful love* to the point that she wrote in all sincerity: "I do nothing other than live for Jesus". She spoke to Jesus from her bride's heart: "Jesus, make me more and more your own. Jesus, I want to live and die with you and for you". Since childhood, she had been a member of the female branch of Catholic Action, of which she later became parish director, finding important incentives in the Association for human and cultural growth in *an intense atmosphere of fraternal friendship*. She gradually developed a simple, steadfast desire to give her young life to God as an offering of love and especially for the sanctification and perseverance of priests.<sup>7</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, friends of Catholic Action who have gathered in Loreto from Italy, from Spain, from many parts of the world! Today, through the beatification of these three Servants of God, the Lord is saying to you: *the greatest gift you can make to the Church and to the world is holiness*. May you have at heart what the Church has at heart: that numerous men and women of our time be won over by fascination for Christ; may his Gospel shine once more as a *light of hope* for the poor, the sick, those who hunger for justice; may Christian communities be ever more lively, open and attractive; may our cities be *hospitable and liveable* for all; may humanity follow the paths of *peace and brotherhood*.<sup>8</sup> *It is up to you lay people to witness to the faith through your own specific virtues*: fidelity and gentleness in the family, competence at work, tenacity in serving the common good, solidarity in social relations, creativity in doing useful deeds for evangelization and human promotion. It is also up to you, in close communion with the Pastors, to show that *the Gospel is timely* and that faith does not tear the believer from history but roots him in it more deeply. Courage, Catholic Action! May the Lord guide you on your journey of renewal! May the Immaculate Virgin of Loreto accompany you with tender concern; the Church looks to you with confidence; the Pope greets you, supports you and wholeheartedly blesses you. Italian Catholic Action, thank you! © Copyright 2004 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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