



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEXICAN PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME
TO ROME FOR THE CANONIZATIONS**

Monday 22 May 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am pleased to have this meeting with all of you, dear Mexican pilgrims who yesterday took part in the solemn canonization of *Cristóbal Magallanes and his Companion Martyrs*, of *José María de Yermo y Parres*, founder of the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Poor, and of *María de Jesús Sacramentado Venegas*, foundress of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart.

The whole Church rejoices with you, for she sees proclaimed the glory of her children, who also belong to your noble homeland, and she can rely on the example of their devotion to the Lord and on their powerful intercession in her needs. By their eloquent witness they proclaim *the transforming strength of the love of God and neighbour, the essence of the Christian life*, and encourage us to live with renewed fidelity our status as his children, called to bear witness to the faith, to keep hope alive and to practise charity at every moment of our lives.

I affectionately greet the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, the priests and faithful and, in particular, the women religious who have seen their founders canonized. I welcome you all most cordially to this joyful meeting, which is taking place during the Great Jubilee of the Incarnation.

2. Your presence here reminds me of the unforgettable days I spent in Mexico on the occasion of the four apostolic journeys Providence allowed me to make there, culminating in my visit last year to present the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* at the feet of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I placed the life of all the Ecclesial Communities on the Continent of Hope under her protection, so that she might bless them with new and abundant fruits of holiness.

The people of Mexico have always been distinguished by their great love for God, Our Lady, the Church and the Pope, with strong roots in the Catholic faith which, despite the vicissitudes of history, *is an integral and fundamental part of your nation's soul*. This is why I would like to repeat to you what I said during the Holy Mass at the federal capital's racetrack: "Do not let this light of faith be extinguished! Mexico still needs it in order to build a more just and fraternal society in solidarity.... Bring Christ's word to those who still do not know it! Have the courage to bear witness to the Gospel in the streets and squares, in the valleys and mountains of this nation!" ([Homily, 24 January 1999](#); *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 27 January 1999, p. 5).

3. We are observing the Great Jubilee year, which gives us the opportunity to draw near to the infinite treasures of grace and mercy that God has entrusted to the Church. It is therefore necessary - according to each one's particular vocation - to follow Christ radically. He is the way that *gave strength to St Cristóbal Magallanes and his Companions* to be victorious in martyrdom, to *St José María de Yermo y Parres* to become the "*Giant of Charity*", to *St María de Jesús Sacramentado Venegas* to *submit to God's will with humility and generosity*. May their examples and teaching continually instil in you the enthusiasm and the courage to follow Christ with renewed fidelity. You will thus be prepared to face with confidence and hope the difficulties of our time and the challenges of the new evangelization.

4. The states of Jalisco, Zacatecas, Durango, Chihuahua, Guanajuato, Morelos, Guerrero and Colima are the native lands of the new martyr saints. The memory of them and of their generous, heroic commitment lives on, and their glory before God will never fade. These priests, who gave their lives out of fidelity to their priestly ministry, are a shining example for priests today of how to assist the faithful, even at the risk of their own life. Together with them the three lay people are a precious witness of the ecclesial commitment and vocation to holiness that belong to all the baptized and which must prompt us to live in communion of faith and love, especially at the side of those who need us, while always trusting in God.

5. St José María de Yermo y Parres, from the clergy of Puebla de Los Angeles, led a life of prayer and sacrifice, of fervent trust in divine Providence and of heroic charity: his life is an invitation to Christians to follow Christ through love of neighbour by forgetting themselves and, when necessary, by accepting the Cross. In the contemporary world, so in need of brotherhood and solidarity, the new saint teaches us how to establish new relationships in which generous, creative, concrete and dynamic service can foster a new climate of brotherhood in Christ among all.

To continue his work, his eminently priestly spirit led to the foundation of the *Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Poor*, to whom he left the witness of a matchless commitment to the cause of Christ and the poor. Dear religious, daughters of St José María de Yermo, always keep his Gospel traits of humility and simplicity alive in your service of merciful love to your needy brethren and assist them with the same sentiments of the divine Heart. This will help you to keep

alive the ecclesial and missionary sense of your charism and the right direction in your social and spiritual apostolate for the poor.

6. St María de Jesús Sacramentado Venegas was born in the state of Jalisco. After a childhood lived in family surroundings where, despite problems, an intense spiritual atmosphere was fostered, she was led by God to Sacred Heart Hospital in Guadalajara, where she joined other devout women who dedicated themselves to the care of the sick. There, as a skilled and self-sacrificing nurse, she did all she could in the service of health, and, after being elected Superior in 1921, she devoted herself to strengthening the new institute, imbuing her sisters with love for the Church and souls, for privations and sacrifices. She did not shrink from the religious persecution but, on the contrary, promoted new foundations in various states of the republic. Her spiritual life was nourished with constant prayer, the reception of the sacraments and filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, all within the strictest obedience to the Rules of her institute.

Her message retains all its timeliness. Indeed, the firmness of her faith, her boundless trust in God and her untiring love to the point of forgetting herself made her a consecrated woman worthy of imitation. She knew how to strengthen the Congregation of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where she extended her self-giving, after the example of the Good Samaritan, to those who, as she said, "in body and in soul have a greater resemblance to the suffering Christ". With a life like hers, devoted to doing God's will above all else, one can live in peace and serenity, human aspirations that are so necessary for contemporary life. Fortunately, Mexico is now experiencing a springtime of vocations to the religious life; its pioneers are people of the stature of Mother María de Jesús Sacramentado.

7. Dear Mexican pilgrims, yesterday you took part in an extraordinary event: the canonization of 27 of your compatriots during the Great Jubilee. Return to Mexico with the commitment to renew your fidelity to God and the Church, to bear a courageous witness to Christian life always and everywhere, to collaborate in the new evangelization so that Christ may be known and loved by all Mexicans. Also defend the cause of life, of the family, of the poor and of the needy.

May the intercession of the new saints help you in this mission; may you be accompanied by the motherly protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of Mexico and Empress of America. May this Apostolic Blessing, which I affectionately impart to you and willingly extend to your relatives, friends and loved ones, be a pledge of heavenly favours.

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