



The Holy See

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MISSIONARY SISTERS SERVANTS
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE OCCASION
OF THEIR GENERAL CHAPTER**

*To the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit
on the occasion of their General Chapter*

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rm* 1:7). The words of the great Apostle Paul serve to convey to you my heartfelt affection in the Lord and my earnest prayer that the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit will experience the Twelfth General Chapter as a time of renewed joy in your vocation and recommitment to your founding charism. Dedicated as you are to the Holy Spirit, I invoke an abundant outpouring of his gifts upon the members of the Chapter so that in all things they may act for the good of the Congregation, the progress of the Church's mission, and the glory of the Triune God.

The Chapter has set itself a lofty and demanding task: to rekindle the fire of *missionary zeal* in your communities. Be assured that the heart of Peter's Successor is filled with the same hope. In my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* I wrote that the Church "cannot forgo her missionary activity among the peoples of the world. It is the primary task of the *missio ad gentes* to announce that it is in Christ, 'the Way, and the Truth, and the Life' (cf. *Jn* 14:6), that people find salvation" (No. 56). You, dear Sisters, understand the significance of these words, and therefore the grace and responsibility that is yours in the Church.

In these weeks the Chapter, a gathering of Sisters from many countries of the world, has examined the practical circumstances of your call to mission, and will present to the whole Congregation a set of proposals and a leadership team for the coming years.

In your Chapter, you are guided by the spirit and teachings of your Founders, Blessed Arnold Janssen, Blessed Maria Helena Stollenwerk, and the Servant of God Josepha Hendrina

Stenmanns. As a providential heritage they left you the call to serve in frontier situations, where people have less chances in life and where no others take care of them. The call to heroic love is the very heart of your vocation, the call to be the least and to sacrifice oneself for the work of evangelization, of which Mother Josepha wrote. As long as the Congregation desires to live by that kind of love, it will grow and flourish, even when you seem to be surrounded by difficulties and indifference. The world needs witnesses. It therefore needs you to follow the path of contemplation, so that a deeper relationship with Christ will enable you to make him "known through his manifold presence in the Church and in the world, and confessed as the meaning of history and the light of life's journey" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 15).

You are familiar with the concept that the first and greatest act of charity is to proclaim the Gospel (Blessed Arnold Janssen). I pray most fervently that the intercession of your Founders will strengthen all the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit for the tasks now at hand. To all of you, to the Sisters in formation, those in all the varied activities of your apostolate, and those who are elderly and infirm, I offer the assurance of a special place in my prayers. Entrusting the Congregation to the care of Mary, Mother of the Church, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing to the members of the Chapter and to all the Sisters, as a pledge of endless grace and peace in Jesus Christ, "the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation" (*Col 1:15*).

From the Vatican, 26 June 2002

IOANNES PAULUS II