



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DOMINICAN SISTERS
OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

Friday, 5 January 2001

I was pleased to learn that the capitulars have been meeting in recent days to reflect with you on suitable ways to promote a renewal of the congregation which will enable it to face the challenges of the present time. I am pleased to extend my cordial greetings to you and your sisters, as I offer my prayer to God with you that he will generously give you the gifts of his Spirit and guide you in making decisions that can give your religious family new enthusiasm in the work of evangelization, which has accompanied it since the beginning of its commitment to the Church.

Founded in Sicily at the end of the 19th century through the zeal of Dominican Fr Timoteo Longo, it reflects the evangelical spirit, traditions and ideals of the Order of Friars Preachers. The congregation therefore makes its own that unity of life between contemplative interiority and apostolic action which was achieved by St Dominic, and it constantly seeks to foster it in the community celebration of the sacred liturgy, in prayer, in study and in fraternal communion.

Evangelization is a specific goal of your institute, which cares in a particular way for the human and Christian advancement of young people through schools, youth ministry, family catechesis in parishes and popular missions. At this 15th General Chapter, dear sisters, you have decided to examine the timeliness of your charism and the practical decisions it requires. Social and cultural changes, in fact, call for a renewed and creative effort in your apostolate. I express my deep appreciation of your desire for community discernment. The very rich spiritual legacy you have inherited will help you to find appropriate ways for suitably transmitting the Gospel to men and women today. This work will be all the more effective and credible the more it relies on intense fraternal communion. I encourage you, then, to take constant care to maintain a harmonious balance between your community life and apostolic activities.

For all these topics of reflection and commitment I would like to assure you of my spiritual support. With God's help I am certain you will be able to find positive values and encouragement in today's

situations, which are very different from those of the past. Continue to keep alive the spirit which has sustained you in recent decades. It spurs you to love others as they are, especially young people, to seek them out wherever they may be and to accept them, so that they in turn will accept Christ. I pray that this renewal will always be accompanied by sound formation at every level, so that your communities will be living, fervent and hard-working.

I entrust these intentions to Mary, Seat of Wisdom, and cordially bless you, the capitulars and the whole congregation.