

Telegram from the Vatican to the Members of The General Chapter 2005

At the beginning of the Chapter, a telegram, translated into English below, was received from the Vatican Secretary of State:

"Grateful for the filial message sent on the occasion of the General Chapter of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, the Supreme Pontiff sends cordial greetings expressing fervent wishes, auguring that this important event stir up general proposals of a renewed adherence to Christ and an ever more generous involvement in the service of the Gospel in response to the challenges of the present time. Invoking through the intercession of the Mother of the Redeemer a generous effusion of heavenly light and gifts, His Holiness encourages this Religious Family to continue the fruitful Christian testimony in faithfulness to its specific charism, and willingly imparts to you, the members of the Chapter, and to the entire Institute, the requested Apostolic Blessing.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State
March 7, 2005

An audience with the Holy Father was foreseen for March 10th, but the Holy Father was in the hospital. He sent his address, translated into English below:

The Address of the Holy Father, John Paul II, to the Members The General Chapter 2005

Dearest Brothers!

1. I am delighted to address to you my greetings of best wishes on the occasion of the General Chapter of your Institute. This is an event of grace that constitutes for you a powerful call to return to the roots of your Congregation and to make a profound study of your charism, seeking to discern the most suitable means of living it in the present socio-cultural context. I encourage you to continue on the path of fidelity to your rich spiritual patrimony. In fact, only thanks to a lively ascetical fervor, instilled into apostolic works, will it be possible for you fully to realize your vocation and to see the fruits of holiness and of missionary activity multiplied in your works.

In this year, particularly dedicated to the mystery of the Eucharist, make this wonderful Sacrament even more the center of your personal and communal existence, placing yourselves with docility in the school of the Holy Virgin, "the Eucharistic woman." May she be the one to help you attain an ever-intimate communion with Christ and obtain for you "the gift of a prompt obedience, of a faithful poverty, and of a fruitful virginity" (The day of consecrated life, 2 February 2005).

If there will burn in your heart an ardent love for the Eucharist and for Our Lady, you will make the Shrines, where in various parts of the world you offer your valued service, ever more true "cenacles" of prayer and of cordial welcome. Pilgrims, who will hasten to them, will be able to experience comforting intimacy with Christ and be encouraged to follow in his footsteps with joy.

2. Dear Brothers! You belong to a religious Institute that numbers among its members exemplary religious who have served the Church in a variety of fields, frequently finding themselves in difficult and dangerous situations. Not few in number are your confreres who have traversed the road of intrepid Christian witness to the end. Let it suffice to call to mind figures such as the martyrs of Rosica [Raw-shee-tsah], Anthony Leszczewicz and George Kaszyra, as well as Fabian Abrantowicz and Andrew Cikota. Sustained by the witness of these your Confreres, faithful disciples of Christ and generous laborers of the Gospel, do not be afraid to face the challenges of our times.

Intensify your apostolic thrust, engaging yourselves with renewed enthusiasm in promoting priestly and religious vocations and adequately preparing the aspirants of your Institute to be generous laborers in the Lord's vineyard. May your pastoral collaboration with the lay faithful likewise grow, dedicating special

care to the young and to the needy, to the emarginated and to the aged. Be for everyone apostles and witnesses of Divine Mercy.

Faithful, moreover, to the charism that contradistinguishes you, be children devoted to the Immaculate Conception. A few months have passed since the Church has celebrated the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin. As is known, your Founder, Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, knew how to spread and defend with courage the truth of the Immaculate Conception even before it was defined as a dogma of faith. Follow faithfully his example and spread Marian devotion all around you.

3. Reflecting on the mission that you are called to exercise in diverse parts of the world and in a variety of social surroundings, I wish to address to you the words I have written in the Apostolic Letter *Mane nobiscum Domine* [Stay with us Lord]: "Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking of His Body and Blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The encounter with Christ, ever deepened in Eucharistic intimacy, gives rise in the Church and in every Christian the urgent summons to give witness and to evangelise" (nr 24).

"Pro Christo et Ecclesia": May this continue to be the program of your religious family to which I wish an abundant harvest of apostolic fruit. I assure to that end a constant remembrance in prayer, while with pleasure I impart my Blessing to the new Superior General, to his Council, to the members of the General Chapter and to all your Congregation, as well as to your Co-workers.

From the Policlinica Gemelli, 10 March 2005