



The Holy See

BEATIFICATION OF SIX NEW SERVANTS OF GOD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

II Sunday of Easter, 27 April 2003

1. *"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever (Ps 117[118]: 1).* This is what the Church sings today on this Second Sunday of Easter, *Divine Mercy Sunday*. In the Paschal Mystery, the comforting design of salvation, God's merciful love whose privileged witnesses are the saints and blessed in Heaven, is fully revealed.

By a providential coincidence, I have the joy of raising six new Blessed to the honours of the altars on this very *Sunday on which we celebrate the "Divine Mercy"*. Each one of them, in a different way, expressed the Lord's tender and wonderful mercy: [James Alberione](#), a priest, Founder of the Pauline Family; [Mark of Aviano](#), a priest of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin; [Maria Christina Brando](#), virgin, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters, Expiatory Victims of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; [Eugenia Ravasco](#), virgin, Foundress of the Congregations of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; [Maria Domenica Mantovani](#), virgin, Co-Foundress of the Institute of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family; [Julia Salzano](#), virgin, Foundress of the Congregation of the Catechist Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

2. *"These (signs) are written... that believing you may have life in his Name" (Jn 20: 31).* The Good News is a universal message destined for the people of all times. It is personally addressed to each one and asks to be expressed in his life style. When Christians become "living Gospels", they are transformed into eloquent "signs" of the Lord's mercy and their witness touches others' hearts more easily. As docile instruments in the hands of divine Providence, they have a profound effect on history. This is how it was with these six new Blessed, who come from beloved Italy, a land rich in saints.

3. [Bl. James Alberione](#) felt the need to make Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, known

"to all people of our time with the means of our time", as he liked to say. He was inspired by the Apostle Paul, whom he described as a "theologian and architect of the Church", remaining ever docile and faithful to the Magisterium of the Successor of Peter, a "beacon" of truth in a world that is so often devoid of sound spiritual references. "May there be a group of saints to use these means", this apostle of the new times was in the habit of repeating.

What a formidable heritage he left his religious family! May his spiritual sons and daughters keep intact the spirit of their origins, to respond adequately to the needs of evangelization in the contemporary world.

4. In a different time and context, *Bl. Mark of Aviano* shone with holiness as his soul burned with a longing for prayer, silence and adoration of God's mystery. This contemplative who journeyed along the highways of Europe was the centre of a wide-reaching spiritual renewal, thanks to his courageous preaching that was accompanied by numerous miracles. An unarmed prophet of divine mercy, he was impelled by circumstances to be actively committed to defending the freedom and unity of Christian Europe. Bl. Mark of Aviano reminds the European continent, opening up in these years to new prospects of cooperation, that *its unity will be sounder if it is based on its common Christian roots*.

5. All that God worked through *Maria Christina Brando* is astonishing. Her Eucharistic and expiatory spirituality is expressed in two lines, like *"two branches that stem from the same trunk"*: love of God and love of neighbour. Her desire to take part in Christ's passion, as it were, "overflowed" into educational works, for the purpose of making people aware of their dignity and open to the Lord's merciful love.

6. *Bl. Eugenia Ravasco* was wholly concerned with spreading love for the Hearts of Christ and Mary. Contemplating these two Hearts, she was passionately devoted to serving her neighbour and joyfully devoted her whole life to young people and the poor. With foresight, she was able to open herself to the pressing needs of the mission, with special concern for those who had "fallen away" from the Church.

The words "doing good for love of the Heart of Jesus", and "burning with desire for the good of others, especially young people" neatly sum up the charism she bestowed on her institute.

7. *Bl. Maria Domenica Mantovani* followed the same path. This praiseworthy daughter of the region of Verona, a disciple of Bl. Giuseppe Nascimbeni, was inspired by the Holy Family of Nazareth to make herself "all things to all people", ever attentive to the needs of the "poor people". She was extraordinarily *faithful, in all circumstances and to her last breath, to the will of God*, by whom she felt loved and called. What a fine example of holiness for every believer!

8. Then, what can I say about Blessed *Julia Salzano*? In advance of her time, she was an apostle

of the new evangelization in which she combined apostolic activity with prayer, offered ceaselessly, especially for the conversion of the "indifferent".

This new Blessed encourages us to persevere in faith and *never to lose our confidence in God* who does all things. Called to be the apostles of modern times, may believers also be inspired by Bl. Julia Salzano "to instil in many creatures the immense charity of Christ".

9. "*Eternal is God's mercy*" which shines in each one of the new Blesseds. Through them God has worked great marvels! Truly eternal, O Lord, is your mercy! You never abandon those who turn to you. With these new blesseds let us repeat to you with filial confidence:

"Jesus, I trust in you! *lezu, ufam Tobie!*", the words of St Faustina Kowalska.

Help us, Mary, Mother of Mercy, to proclaim with our lives that "*God's love endures for ever*".

Now and forever. Amen! Alleluia!

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