



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARITY (ROSMINIANS)**

Hall of Popes

Monday, 1 October

2018[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of your General Congregation and I greet you all with affection, starting with the General Superior, Fr. Vito Nardin, whom I thank for his words. Your visit shows the attachment to the Church and to the Holy See recommended and lived by your Founder, Blessed Antonio Rosmini. He lived heroically. He loved to repeat: “The Christian must nourish in himself a love, an attachment, and a respect without any limit for the Holy See of the Roman Pontiff” (*Maxims of Christian perfection adapted to all kinds of persons*, Lesson III, No. 6). Fidelity to the see of Peter expresses unity in diversity and ecclesial communion, an indispensable element for a fruitful mission.

During your assembly, you proposed to reflect on the theme “Be perfect ... be merciful”. This is about bringing to the fore the joyful news that all Christians are called to holiness, and to walk this path together in charity. This perspective, exquisitely evangelical, is a focal point of the teaching of your Founder, and can be found in a special way in the book of the Maxims. Holiness and the exercise of virtues are not reserved for the few, or even for any particular moment of existence. Everyone can live them in daily fidelity to the Christian vocation; consecrated persons, in particular, in faithful adherence to religious profession. In this sense, Blessed Rosmini prayed: “O God, send us your heroes”. What I emphasized in my recent Motu proprio *Majorem hac dilectionem* on the heroism of life was evident in him; that is, “the offer of life” for others, unto death (5). Holiness is the way of true reform of the Church, which, as Rosmini clearly saw, transforms the world to the extent to which she reforms herself.

Your Founder wished to attribute to his religious family the denomination “Institute of Charity”,

precisely to highlight the supremacy of the virtue of charity, which, as the Apostle says, must be placed “above all” (*Col 3:14*). And Rosmini accompanied charity with a strong “inner steadfastness, intrepid in “silence”: may his example encourage you to progress in the fruitfulness of inner silence and in the heroism of external silence. This is the path that produces fruits of good and holiness, the path that the Saints have travelled and which the Church indicates to every believer. It is also important to maintain that “holy indifference” that your Founder drew from St. Ignatius of Loyola: without it, it is not possible to implement an authentic universal charity.

In your ecclesial activity, I invite you to carry out your works of corporal, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral charity in such a way as to always follow the Holy Spirit who indicates where, when, and how to love. As far as educational action is concerned, it is not limited to simple instruction, but it is intellectual charity. Indeed, the living centre of Christian education is the science that is transmitted starting from the Word of God, whose fullness is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Your apostolic presence has radiated in India, Tanzania and Kenya, as well as in the United States of America and Europe: I encourage you to be men with hands always outstretched to the suffering, to bring them the help of the faith and charity. I think in particular of your confreres and the Rosminian Sisters who work in Venezuela, called to witness spiritual and material closeness to the sorely tried people.

It is also good that your Institute should continue to reflect carefully on its own charism and, considering the fruits that have matured over the years, may increasingly open itself to the expectations of the Church and of the world. With the light of the Holy Spirit, you will find ways to continue with renewed enthusiasm, perceiving the signs of the times, the social urgencies and spiritual and material poverty of those who await words and gestures of salvation and hope. In this apostolic work you are joined by the “Ascritti”, clerics and laymen who, living in the world, wish to attain evangelical perfection in communion with your Institute. It is good for them to be increasingly involved in your community life.

Dear brothers, your Institute, with the specificity of the Rosminian charism, can still offer a valid service in the proclamation of the Gospel. I urge you to propose with constancy and foresight the spiritual and doctrinal heritage that you have inherited. May the inevitable difficulties not discourage you, but rather encourage you to trust always in God so as to advance with joy and hope the mission that He has entrusted to you. May the Holy Spirit make you living instruments of universal charity in the Church and in the world, capable of helping those you meet in your apostolate to incessantly renew hope, which “does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” (*Rom 5: 5*).

I entrust you to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you. Please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

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