

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER, POPE PAUL VI,  
IN ST. PETER'S BASILICA ON THE DAY OF  
BEATIFICATION, OCTOBER 13, 1968\*

Your Eminences, Venerable Brothers, dearest Sons and Daughters, and you, Sisters of the Divine Savior, who are particularly in Our thoughts today:

After the sacred ceremony in honor of the newly beatified Mary of the Apostles, Foundress of the Salvatorian Sisters, and after thanking the Lord in the Eucharistic rites celebrating His divine presence among us and His assistance, We wish to say a word about this beatification - not only in explanation, but also to express Our pleasure. It is an event which makes the whole Church rejoice, fills with joy and comfort a great religious family of women, and of men too, members of the Order which was her inspiration, and from which she got the name. It reveals the example and stimulating edification of a strong and most remarkable woman, who honors her native country by her natural and Christian virtues. It is known all over the world, wherever the charitable institutions and the religious activities of the Salvatorian Sisters testify to the great vitality of the institutions founded by the Blessed Mary, who is today honored by the Church. It offers to the world of today and certainly that of the future, the testimony of a Catholicity wholly engaged in its service and salvation.

Our pleasure is akin to that felt by all who wish to dwell on the story of Theresa von Wüllenweber, who is now clothed as by a sacred mantle with the name of Mary of the Apostles. We leave to her Congregation, to her vast spiritual following, and to biographers or readers the enjoyment of exploring the "life of the saints", that is, to enjoy the most unusual and mysterious experiences of the human spirit; it will be a lasting, fruitful, interesting and edifying pleasure.

**The Ideal of  
"Apostolate  
and Mission"**

We will confine Our admiration to the two aspects which characterize the life and the vocation of the Blessed Mary: the Apostolate and missionary service. They are not two separate aspects, but rather two qualities that are blended in her person, making the apostolate the purpose of her life and the reason for her dedication and total self-abnegation in Christ's cause. They are also the explanation why her apostolate aspired to and attained its most evangelical and courageous form, missionary service.

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\* English translation from: *Yearbook of the Sisters of the Divine Savior*, 1968/70. Original Italian found at: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1968/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_hom\\_19681013.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1968/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19681013.html)

We believe that whoever wants to see this new daughter of the celestial Church in the light of her apostolate and her mission, will discover in them the logical and operative thread of her earthly existence, and the cause for her glorification. And, as happens to ideas when we see them personified and alive in some human story, the two elementary but substantial aspects seem clearer, more proven, richer in meaning and implications, whether these are doctrinal or moral, psychological or practical. It is fitting to recall here what Blessed Mary wrote about herself, giving almost a definition of her own personality: "I feel strongly called to everything apostolic". (Letter to Bonaventure Lüthen, 1882). And it was certainly her vocation that enabled her — the first-born of a family of the German nobility — to make the generous renunciation of her social status and her possessions. It was certainly her special vocation that made her dissatisfied with various attempts at the religious life, and which made her anxious to express fully in practice the fervor of her interior life. We think it would not be difficult to trace the constructive elements of the apostolate — using the term in its original evangelical sense — through the study of the life of this unusual woman, cultured, full of human sensibility and spiritual fervor.

**To dare all for  
God's reign**

What is the Apostolate? Considered in its psychological aspect, where grace is the impulse for interior spirituality, the apostolate is above all an interior voice, which values things in a disconcerting manner, considering as vain certain things we hold dear and good, and exalting others which are considered difficult, extraneous, and Utopian. It is a voice that is disturbing and consoling at the same time. It is as sweet as it is imperious; troublesome, yet loving; a voice that in unexpected circumstances or grave events becomes at a certain moment attractive, decisive, almost revealing to us our lives and our destinies. It is even prophetic, and almost victorious, which banishes every uncertainty, timidity and fear, until it renders easy, desirable and joyful the answer of our whole being in the words that express the supreme secret of love: Yes, Lord, tell me what I must do and I will dare it, I will do it, just as St. Paul, struck to the ground at the gate of Damascus said: "What would you have me do?" (Acts 9,5) The roots of the apostolate lose themselves in these depths. It is vocation, election, the inner meeting with Christ; it is the abandonment of personal autonomy to His will, to His forceful presence. It is a sure substitution of our hearts — poor, restless, changeable and sometimes faithless, but eager for love — with His heart, the heart of Christ. And when it begins to pulsate in His elected creature, then the second act of the psychological drama of the apostolate takes place; we feel

the need to act, to speak, to give, to pour out and to instil in others our own treasure, our own fire. The drama passes from the personal to the social, from the inner life to outward expression.

The charity of the religious relationship becomes charity for our neighbor. And as the first form of charity has no boundaries (Eph. 3, 18), so the second has no limits. The apostolate becomes the continual expansion of the soul, the exuberance of a personality possessed by Christ and animated by His spirit. It engenders the need to run, to act, to devise, to dare everything possible for the expansion of God's Kingdom, for the salvation of others, of everyone. It is almost intemperate in its action, so that only external difficulties succeed in moderating and limiting it in practice.

In the course of the last century, with its tremendous intellectual and social upheavals, many souls were chosen by the Holy Spirit to be instrumental in bringing about an awakening in the Church and in helping her to recover the riches she had somewhat lost in the course of the general cultural and social transformations. The apostolate, as such, has now become the distinguishing mark of many new religious families, and the ardor and enterprising spirit of women in this field equals that of men whom they outnumber. Among these, We wish to point out the religious family which today has obtained the highest recognition the Church can give: the Beatification of its Foundress.

Mary of the Apostles was the name which this elect daughter of the Church chose. It is not surprising that her name in religion became at the same time her program and her guiding star in the mission field. The apostolic spirit springs from a two-fold love, that of Christ for a soul and of the soul for Christ, and the missionary vocation stems from it. Cardinal Journet aptly says: "The missionary drive can exist only in reference to the apostolicity of the Church" (Journet, *The Church* II-1208). She herself wrote: "My first inclination was to dedicate myself to the missions and to help them as much as I could" (from a letter), and again: "Seven years ago, I promised the good God, almost as a vow, to dedicate myself to the Missions as far as my strength would allow" (to Msgr. von Essen, 25.IV.1882).

She understood intuitively that the mission field, in the broad sense of the word, is not restricted to countries outside the boundaries of the established Church, but it can also be found within her own territorial sociological spheres. Her many varied foundations proved this intuition to be correct and, as she looked ahead, she perceived the signs of what the Church has since become conscious of, and which

the Council has expressly declared: “That the Christian vocation is, by its nature, a vocation to the apostolate” (Apost. actuos, n. 2) and that, moreover, there “are many ministries within the Church but only one mission” (ib.). This truth comforted and strengthened her conviction and although she was only a woman, she undertook a truly missionary apostolate in the strict sense of the word: that is, announcing the Gospel and founding the Church in lands where it had never been established, and this at a time when there were no women missionaries, or when they were just beginning to appear as religious societies. This daring trust in Divine Providence bore immediate fruit.

Here, We must also recall the name of the German priest who was both an inspiration and a teacher for Blessed Mary of the Apostles. We mean the Servant of God, John Baptist Jordan, later Father Francis Mary of the Cross, Founder of the Salvatorian Fathers. Today, as We look upon these two flourishing and exemplary religious families, both having their first foundations here in Rome and now spread throughout the world, We must express Our admiration and gratitude and Our trust in their future.

**Living Institutes  
to carry the  
Gospel message**

Before We end, We want to draw your attention to this fact: that all of these wonders wrought within the Church and embodied in living, active institutions (call them “canonical structures”, if you wish) have sprung from the age-old and very first message of the Gospel: the message that Jesus Christ is our Savior, our true Savior, the one and only necessary Savior of the world. As We stand at the tomb of Peter the Apostle, which is the springboard and the goal of all our missionaries and the center of unity and of catholicity, We realize that it is from here that their apostolic love flows and their mandate proceeds. It is from here that their valiant armies draw the inspiration that moulds their religious character and sanctifies their souls. This is the vision We have before Our eyes and the desire We nourish in Our heart. May the luminous example and heavenly protection of Blessed Mary of the Apostles ever concentrate our eyes on this vision and strengthen this desire.