



(ZENIT, Vatican City, May 27, 2016).- Pope Francis praised the patrimony of the Little Work of Divine Providence today, noting as he addressed participants in their General Chapter that during their founder's time, members of the congregation were called "the running priests," because they were always quickly moving to those in need.

The Pope said this today as he received in audience the participants in the 14th General Chapter of the Little Work of Divine Providence, which was founded by St. Luigi Orione (1872-1940).

The chapter's theme is "Servants of Christ and of the Poor," and the Chapter Fathers have elected a new Superior General, Father Tarcisio Vieira.

"The proclamation of the Gospel, especially in our days, requires much love of the Lord, joined to a particular initiative," the Pope told them.

Referring to them being called the running priests, he said, "*Amor est in via,*" reminded Saint Bernard, love is always on the way, love is always setting out. With Don Orione, I also exhort you not to remain closed in your environments, but to go 'out.'"

"There is so much need of priests and Religious that do not stay only in charitable institutions," the Holy Father continued, affirming that this work is necessary, but that there is also a need to "bring to every environment, including the most distant, the perfume of Christ's charity."

"Never lose sight either of the Church or of your Religious Community, indeed

your heart must be there in your 'cenacle,'" he said, "but then it is necessary to go out to bring God's mercy to all, indistinctly."

Here is a ZENIT translation of the Pope's address to those present at the audience.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to meet with you on the occasion of your Chapter General. I greet you cordially, beginning with the new Superior General, whom I thank for his words and to whom I express best wishes for good work, together with the Advisers.

We are all on our way in following Jesus. The entire Church is called to walk with Jesus on the roads of the world, to meet today's humanity that is in need – as Don Orione wrote – of the "bread of the body and of the divine balm of faith" (Letter II, 463). To embody these words of your Founder and the essential nature of his teaching in the today of history, you have put your identity at the center of the reflections of the Chapter General, summarized by Don Orione in the quality of "*servants of Christ and of the poor.*" The master way is to always have united these two dimensions of your personal and apostolic life. You have been called and consecrated by God to remain with Jesus (cf. *Mark 3:14*) and to serve Him in the poor and the excluded of society. In them, you touch and serve the flesh of Christ and grow in union with Him, watching always so that the faith does not become an ideology and charity is not reduced to philanthropy, and the Church does not end up being an "NGO."

Your being servants of Christ qualifies everything you are and do, it guarantees your apostolic effectiveness, renders your service fruitful. Don Orione recommended that you "seek and medicate the people's wounds, taking care of their infirmities, going out to meet them in their moral and material needs: in this way your action will not only be effective but profoundly Christian and salvific" (Writings 61, 114). I encourage you to follow these pointers; they are all the more true! In fact, by so doing, not only will you imitate Jesus the Good Samaritan but you will offer people the joy of encountering Jesus and the salvation He brings to all. In fact, "those who allow themselves to be saved by Him are freed from sin, from sadness, from interior emptiness and from isolation. With Jesus Christ joy is always born and reborn" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1).

The proclamation of the Gospel, especially in our days, requires much love of the Lord, joined to a particular initiative. I learned that, when the Founder was still living, in some places you were called "the running priests," because they saw you always moving amidst the people with the rapid step of one who cares. "*Amor est in via*," reminded Saint Bernard, love is always on the way, love is always setting out. With Don Orione, I also exhort you not to remain closed in your environments, but to go "out." There is so much need of priests and Religious that do not stay only in charitable institutions, though necessary, but who are able to go beyond the boundaries to bring to every environment, including the most distant, the perfume of Christ's charity. Never lose sight either of the Church or of your Religious Community, indeed your heart must be there in your "cenacle," but then it is necessary to go out to bring God's mercy to all, indistinctly.

Your service to the Church will be all the more effective the more you make every effort to take care of your personal adherence to Christ and your spiritual formation. By witnessing the beauty of consecration, the good life of the Religious, "servants of Christ and of the poor," you will be an example for young people. Life generates life; the holy and happy Religious awakens new vocations.

I entrust your Congregation to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, venerated by you as "Mother of Divine Providence." I ask you, please, to pray for me and for my service to the Church, so that I too am on the way. I impart the Apostolic Blessing upon you, upon your fellow Brothers, especially the elderly and the sick, and upon all those that share your Institute's charism.

[Original text: Italian] [Translation by ZENIT}