



Pope Francis says we live in times of “rampant relativism that undermines the edifice of faith at its base and strips the very idea of Christian fidelity of its meaning.”

The Holy Father made the comments in a speech on Friday to the Oblates of St. Joseph (OSJ) who are gathered in Rome for their General Chapter.

The Pope also gave a special greeting to Fr. Jan Pelczarski, the Order’s new Superior General, and to Fr. Michele Piscopo, his outgoing predecessor.

Intolerant rationalism and rampant relativism

Pope Francis said the Order’s Founder, St. Joseph Marelli, lived in a time of rationalism that was intolerant of every spiritual dogma.

Given the similarities with our own culture, the Pope said the Saint’s witness is more relevant than ever.

“Faced with a superficial culture that exalts the possession of material goods and promises happiness through dangerous shortcuts,” he said, the Oblates of St. Joseph, “do not fail to stimulate young people to temper the spirit and to form a mature personality, capable of strength but also tenderness.”

St. Joseph’s example

Pope Francis invited the Oblates to follow the example of their namesake, St. Joseph of Nazareth. He said the Saint lived “a discreet, humble, and hard-working lifestyle”.

“He lived his vocation as the guardian of Mary and Jesus with fidelity and simplicity. He was close to his wife in joyful and difficult moments, and established, along with her, a marvelous familiarity with Jesus, whom he had continually before his eyes.”

The Holy Father then pointed out that St. Joseph's virtues are a model for the Oblates.

"Humility", the Pope said, "attracts the Father's goodness; intimacy with the Lord, which sanctifies all Christian work; and, silence and contemplation, united with zeal and hard work to advance the Lord's will."

Pope Francis summed up how the Oblates are to live with their Founder's words: "Be Carthusian monks in the house and apostles outside."

Who are the Oblates of St. Joseph?

The Oblates of Saint Joseph are a religious Institute of priests and brothers whose principle apostolate is to work with young people and the poor. Founded in 1878, the Oblates have communities in at least 12 countries, and are involved the education and catechesis of young people, parish ministry, as well as serving the underprivileged and orphanages.

Pope Francis prayed that the "two Josephs, the Universal Church's Patron and your Founder" make their General Chapter fruitful and sustain the Institute's mission.