

**Letter of the Holy Father John Paul II on the
Occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Congregation**

**Given at the Vatican, March 25, 1994
On the Solemnity of the Annunciation**

With all my heart I unite myself with this religious family of Sisters – the Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - who this year commemorate the hundredth anniversary of their existence in the Church.

Together with the entire Congregation, I thank God for the grace of religious vocation - for that great, spiritual good with which the People of God have been enriched throughout these hundred years through sacrificial, total love, and dedicated service to God and man.

“Let us not forget the great works of God” (cf. Ps 78:7) and “thank Him for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. Eph 5:20).

On this occasion, I return in my thoughts and heart to your Founder, Bishop Joseph Sebastian Pelczar, whom on June 2, 1991, during my fourth pastoral visit to Poland, it was given me to proclaim Blessed. This great man of God, son of the Polish land, called into existence on April 15, 1894, your Congregation of the Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, entrusting simultaneously to Sister Ludwika Szczesna the task of first Superior. He built your Congregation on a firm foundation - and this is Christ, his Most Sacred Heart. The devotion of the Heart of God was one of the main characteristics of the spirituality of Blessed Joseph Sebastian. He desired, therefore, that it would be for you an inexhaustible source of devotion, efficacy, and apostolic activity.

The Providence of God placed before your Religious Family as its main apostolate care for the moral life of girls and concern for the sick and abandoned. Faithful to your charism, you have fulfilled and are fulfilling this service in the spirit of great devotion and dedication. The first “shelters for servants” in Cracow - founded at the beginnings of the Congregation - as well as the subsequent establishment of houses of care, hospitals and kindergartens, testify to this. Very well known and valued is your catechetical work and your dedicated service in parishes in Poland and beyond her borders: in France, the United States, and, not long ago, in the Ukraine.

Writing this letter to you, I desire to commemorate, with gratefulness, your special service that you fulfill in the Eternal City and Papal House. By this service, in a special way you are giving witness to your love towards the Church and the successor of St. Peter.

The readiness of offering oneself through love in a full and undivided way, caused that your Congregation wholeheartedly undertook mission activity, establishing your religious houses on the African continent in Libya and Zaire, and on the American continent in Bolivia.

Let this rich past of your Congregation be the encouragement to further efforts in realizing the mission God has entrusted to you. We are standing on the threshold of the third millennium of Christianity, carrying with itself new callings for the Church, and, in her, to each religious community. It is necessary that you, as a living part of the universal Church, would be able continually to read the “signs of the times” (cf. GS, 4). That you would be also able, with open “eyes of faith (cf. Eph 1:18) to perceive the needs of today’s man and share with him his joys, concerns and sadness. The more you are filled with God, the more clearly you will show him to the world and the much more effective will be your part in the difficult work of evangelization.

The preparation for such a great jubilee of your Congregation was preceded by personal and communal effort of renewal of the spiritual life. As the motto for this preparation, you have chosen the words: “You will love...” (Mk 12:30). I would like so much that these words would become your program for the future. In them consists the whole essence of the consecrated life – a life that is a covenant of spousal love, a great and mysterious communion of life and love with God.

I pray that this Jubilee will enkindle in your hearts love for Christ and for man, and will strengthen the consciousness of an exclusive love belonging to God alone. I entrust you to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Heart full of goodness of love. Look to this Heart for strength towards endless spiritual growth and the perfection of your Sacred Heart Sisters identity. Learn from the Divine Heart to embrace with your heart all people needing spiritual, moral or material help. Today the world needs a great heart, an open heart, a heart according to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

To Mother General and the whole community of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I wish that Christ would increase your ranks, continually sustain the desire for faithfulness to your charism of religious vocation, and perfect your love.

To Mary, Mother of Christ - she who is most dedicated and perfectly consecrated to God (RD, 17) - I entrust the future of your Congregation and from my heart bless you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.