

**HOMILY FOR THE OPENING MASS  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY**

**Paris, 29 October 2021**



***Readings: Romans 9: 1-5; Luke 14: 1-6***

“This morning’s readings are very appropriate as we begin your General Assembly, because they relate quite well to your chosen theme: “EPHATA! Break through the gate... Go towards... Encounter.”

In the first reading, the Apostle Paul expresses his anguish for his people because they have not responded to the Good News of the Messiah’s coming. He goes so far as to say he would wish to be accursed, if it would bring about their salvation.

You too, I am sure, often have hearts filled with sorrow because you cannot answer all the cries of the poor. Many of you would do almost anything to relieve their sufferings, but your hands often are tied by lack of means or bureaucratic impasses. It is sometimes impossible to reply positively to their many needs and this is painful for you.

Today’s Gospel, relates a miracle of healing, similar to the one from which you chose the theme of your Assemblies over the past couple of years. In the one you selected, from the Gospel of Mark, the people

bring the deaf man with the speech impediment to Jesus to ask that he lay his hand on him. In today's healing, Jesus acts without a request, because he knows he is being watched to see if he will cure on the Sabbath. He chooses to assert his authority as Lord of the Sabbath to challenge their way of thinking. In doing so, he tacitly insists that the Sabbath laws never impede the performance of charitable acts.

We too are called often to be countercultural, to go against the common way of thinking. This takes much courage and conviction. We have to be rooted deeply in the teachings of Jesus to be willing to follow his example in this regard. We will be audacious in our actions only when we are convinced of what is right and just.

However, as Benedict XVI reminds us,

*Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his”, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice (Caritas in Veritate, 6).*

Saint Vincent also taught us that “there is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice or that permits us to do more than we reasonably can” (CCD II, 68).

Let us, therefore, strive to have the heart of Saint Paul, focusing completely on our efforts to come to the relief of the poor and suffering, and the heart of Jesus, making sure all our actions are carried out in justice and the spirit of the Gospel.

Let me close with a prayer Saint Vincent offered to the first Daughters:

*O my God, we give ourselves to You for the accomplishment of your plan for us; we acknowledge that we are unworthy of this grace, but we ask it of You through the love of Your Son; we ask it of You through the Blessed Virgin; and we ask it of You through our Sisters whom, in Your goodness, You have already taken to Yourself in Your holy paradise. Grant it to us for Your glory, Lord, and bless us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen (CCD IX, 103).*

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