# Fidelity to the Pope and mission in the orionine charism

4

Modules for
2026–2027



Piccola Opera della Divina Provvidenza

(Opera Don Orione)

# Fidelity to the Pope and mission in the rionine charism

## Six modules for community formation on the *Fourth Vow of fidelity to the Pope*

For the year 2026-2027

# Introduction

## A PATH OF FORMATION AND FIDELITY

This journey we want to do together takes inspiration from the desire to help us Orionines understand and live with greater awareness the fourth vow of special fidelity to the Pope, an essential element of the charism which Don Orione bequeathed to the Congregation.

This is not simply a matter of deepening our understanding of a particular theme in our spirituality, but of rediscovering a dimension that runs through the whole of our religious, apostolic and community life. The fourth vow, in fact, does not concern only our relationship with the Pope: it expresses a concrete way of living love for the Church, service to unity, and closeness to the poor.

Don Orione did not conceive of this fidelity as an external or purely disciplinary adherence. It springs from a profound ecclesial and spiritual experience: loving the Pope in order to love Christ, serving the Church, and leading to her the little ones, the poor and the people.

The questions that accompany the whole journey are simple and, at the same time, demanding:

- What does it mean today, for us Orionines, to belong to the Pope and to the poor?
- In what way does our style of life help the Church to safeguard unity, and help the poor to feel welcomed and loved?

We live in a time marked by cultural and ecclesial tensions, by polarisa-tion, by relational fragility and by new forms of poverty. For this reason too, the fourth vow takes on a particular significance today: it calls us to a mature, interior fidelity, free from rigidity and capable of ecclesial charity.

The journey unfolds in six interconnected stages, intended to offer not merely content, but criteria for discernment and guidance for living.

The first module, *The Roots*, traces the origin of Don Orione's intuition: why the Pope occupies such a central place in the Orionine charism. We ask from what spiritual experience this choice arises.

The second module, *The Masters*, presents some figures who illuminated and prepared this path: Catherine of Siena, Vincent de Paul, Rosmini, Don Bosco, showing the ecclesial tradition within which Don Orione takes his place.

The third module, *The Maturation*, traces the historical development of the fourth vow within the Congregation: from its earliest intuitions to the Constitutions of 1904, 1912 and 1936, up to its explicit formulation approved at the Eighth General Chapter of 1981. It is the sign of a charism that became progressively clearer within the life of the Congregation, even before it was clarified in juridical formulations.

The fourth module, *The Unity of the Charism*, explores in depth the in-separable bond between love for the Pope and service to the poor. For Don Orione, these are not two distinct realities, but a single evangelical passion lived out within the Church.

The fifth module, *Relevance Today*, looks to the present time. In a context where misunderstandings, criticisms and divisions are not lacking, even within the ecclesial community itself, the fourth vow calls us to the responsibility of safeguarding unity with balance, ecclesial sensitivity and charity.

The sixth module, *Life*, finally offers some concrete pathways for translating the fourth vow into daily life: prayer for the Pope, attentiveness to the Magisterium, fraternal communion, service to the poor, and an apostolic style faithful to the charism.

Each module is intended to offer a light for understanding, a direction for the journey, and questions capable of engaging both personal and community life.

## The sources

This booklet also arises from a long process of study and reflection developed within the Orionine Family. The introductory texts of the modules draw in particular on the studies of Fr Antonio Lanza, Fr Ignazio Terzi, Fr Giuseppe Zambarbieri, Fr Flavio Peloso, Fr Giovanni Venturelli and Fr Fernando H. Fornerod, as well as on the letters and writings of Don Ori-one.

The sources are not normally cited within the body of the modules, since the text is conceived above all as an instrument of community formation. They constitute, nonetheless, the foundation of the perspectives proposed and the texts selected.

## The IV Vow in the Constitutions

The articles of the Constitutions dedicated to the fourth vow do not represent merely disciplinary norms. They preserve the journey through which the Congregation has progressively recognised, deepened and handed on Don Orione's original intuition.

Of particular importance are:

- Art. 5, on the special aim of the Congregation;
- Arts. 6 and 15, dedicated to love and dedication to the Church and to the Pope;
- Art. 9, which places the fourth vow at the heart of Orionine spirituality;
- Arts. 47 and 48, which set out its content and its spirit;
- Arts. 117, 130 and 131, which specify some of its apostolic and ecclesial applications.

These modules seek to help not only in coming to know these texts, but above all in understanding their spirit and in verifying their meaning in the concrete life of our communities.

## Reference to the Magisterium

The modules listen attentively to the Magisterium of the Church, in particular to Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV, whose teaching offers important guidance for understanding and living the Orionine charism today, within ecclesial communion and service to the poor.

Among the principal references are the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis and the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* of Pope Leo XIV. A large part of the Magisterial texts proposed in the modules are drawn chiefly from these two documents, chosen because they are particularly close to the themes of mission, ecclesial charity, the unity of the Church and attentiveness to the poor.

It is within this perspective that the journey of the fourth vow in the Congregation can also be understood: a reality born of the life and spiritual experience of Don Orione, progressively deepened and safeguarded by the Church.

*"The spirit and aims of each founder should be religiously honoured, also their sound traditions, all of which make up the patrimony of each institute."* (*Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 2)

## Fonti


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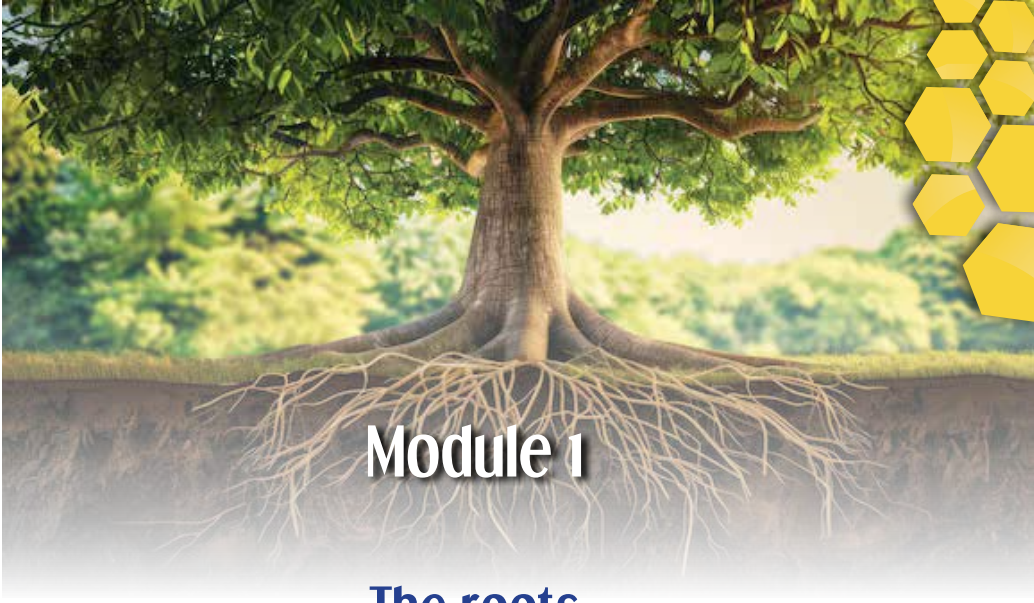
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# Module 1

## The roots

**Why did Don Orione choose the Pope?**

**Objective:** To understand the charismatic origin of the fourth vow.

Don Orione did not choose the Pope out of ideology, nor out of devotional habit. It was a choice born from within, from a spiritual experience nourished by his family environment, by the guidance of his bishop, and by the example of Don Bosco. In the background lay the great upheavals of his time: the Pope held "prisoner," the masses torn away from the faith, the "social apostasy." In that difficult context, a simple yet profound intuition matured within him: to cling to the Pope in order to save the faith of the people. Not out of convenience, nor in defence of any power, but as a concrete form of love for Christ and for the Church.

For this reason, the fourth vow cannot be separated from the whole spiritual logic of the Orionine charism, which was also influenced by the ecclesiology of Rosmini. For Don Orione, everything is interconnected: **truly to love Christ means to love the Church, the Pope, the poor**. The fourth vow is the highest expression of this logic of love, not an additional devotion. This inseparable bond between love for the Pope and service to the poor — only touched on here — lies at the heart of the whole charism and will be explored more fully in Module 4.

**Why should I, today, feel this same urgency?**

## Invocation to the Holy Spirit

*Holy Spirit, Spirit of truth,*
*you revealed to Simon, son of Jonah,*
*what neither flesh nor blood could have revealed to him:*
*that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.*
*You have made possible every act of faith,*
*every choice born not of human calculation but of listening to the Father.*
*Come into us.*
*Renew us in grateful memory of those who have gone before us.*
*Grant that fidelity to the Pope*
*may not be for us a matter of habit or convenience,*
*but a free and joyful response to your initiative,*
*which always precedes our own.*
*Amen*

## From the Constitutions



Articles 6 and 15 together express the charismatic and spiritual heart of the fourth vow: the first from the perspective of love for the Pope, the second from the perspective of dedication to the Church. The two texts illuminate one another and are to be read as a single declaration of identity.

**Art. 6 - *Love and Adherence to the Pope***

We consider the first and most significant aspect of our charism to be unconditional love, humble adherence and most faithful service to the Pope, Vicar of Christ, recognising ourselves as vowed to give him our heart, our mind, our strength, our blood and our life, in order to defend his authority and his magisterium by every possible means. For this reason, we esteem it the highest honour to bind ourselves by a particular vow of special fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff.

**Art. 15 - *Special Dedication to the Church***

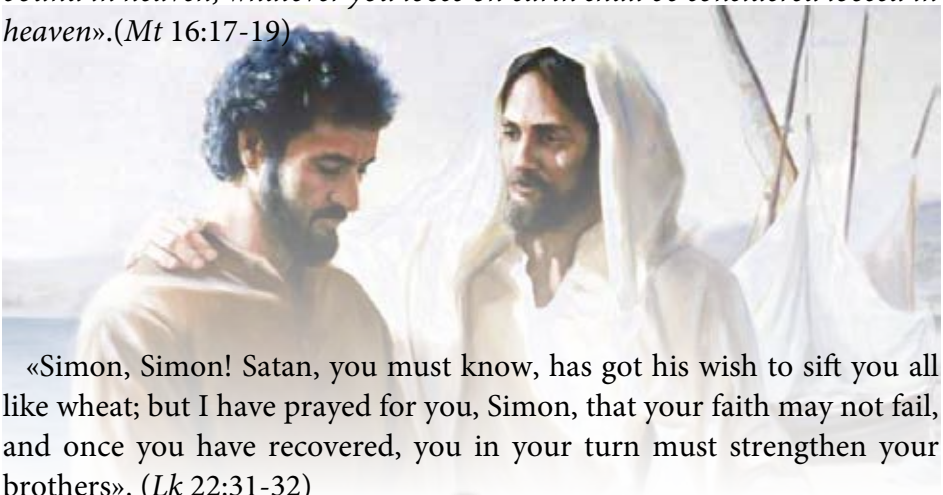
Love and dedication to the Church must be for us the special reason for being and the creed of our life. We must therefore live intimately from the life of the Church and place ourselves at the complete service of her mission among the poor. To this holy mother Church, and to her head, the Pope, we have given ourselves for life and for death.

## From Sacred Scripture

***Mt 16:17-19: The Promise to Peter; Lk 22:31-32: Strengthen Your Brothers.***

Jesus does not choose Peter because he is the best. He chooses him while he is still uncertain, contradictory, capable of denial. The rock is not the solidity of a man; it is the free choice of Christ, who leans upon him. These two texts show where everything begins: not from a human quality, but from a calling.

«*Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven*».(*Mt* 16:17-19)



«Simon, Simon! Satan, you must know, has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers». (*Lk* 22:31-32)



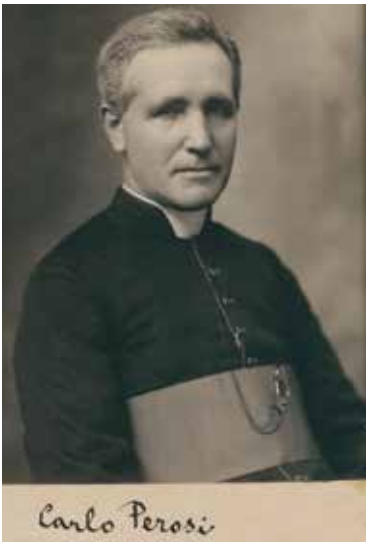
## Don Luigi Orione

***Letter to Fr Carlo Perosi*** **- Tortona, 4 April 1897;**
***Letter to Fr Carlo Sterpi*** **- Tortona, 15 october 1918.**

These are excerpts from two letters that illuminate one another. The first (Tortona, 4 April 1897) is the document in which Don Orione set down in writing his founding intentions, with the prophetic and ardent tone of one who feels himself grasped by something greater. The second (Tortona, 15 October 1918) was written for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Work: it rereads twenty-five years of the journey as a history of concrete fidelity to the Pope, lived out despite opposition and abandonment.

*Most venerated Don Carlo, you have asked me to set down some thoughts on the Work I mentioned to you.*

*Here they are, then: It seems to me that Our Lord Jesus Christ is calling me to a state of great charity, so that at certain moments the Lord presses upon my heart, and then I must weep or laugh with great charity and run, and it is a thing that cannot be well expressed, dear Don Perosi, but it is a great and gentle fire that needs to spread and to set the whole earth aflame.*




*I feel a very great need to cast myself upon the Heart of Our dear Crucified Lord and to die, loving him and weeping with charity…*

*What I said to you the other day was that I would like to embrace all souls and save them all, all of them. And meanwhile to begin planting papal colleges — that is, colleges wholly of Jesus Christ — and to save and save. I feel that I need to run across the whole*

*earth and all the seas, and it seems to me that the immense charity of Our Lord Jesus will give life to all lands and all seas, and all will call upon Jesus Christ.* (*Lettere II*, 254-255)



*«One thought comforts me, and let it be said solely to the glory of God and as an example to those who will come into the Congregation: that, amid so many sins and ingratitude, and coldness, and mistakes, and failings and shortcomings, nevertheless, by divine grace and for divine grace, these 25 years have been 25 years of love and fidelity to the Holy Father and to Holy Mother Church; this indeed, by divine grace, has been done in everything — in the spiritual, in the doctrinal, in discipline as in temporal matters, in the commands of the Holy See as in its wishes, in all that it has asked, that it has desired — we have been humble and faithful and most loving sons at its blessed feet.*

*This the Sons of Divine Providence do well always to remember. In order to fulfil the will and wishes of the Pope, much opposition and hostility and persecution has been suffered; many have looked upon us with disfavour and abandoned us. But whatever we have suffered in order to remain faithful to the Church, to the Pope and to the bishops, who are in all things with the Pope, we shall find waiting for us in Paradise.*

*Now it is necessary to maintain this spirit of "papalinità" (devotion to the Pope), and to continue to serve the Church with all that we are, and to begin again in everything to be wholly God's, with all the fervour of the soul and with all and for the whole of life, with great faith, with great charity, with great abandonment in Divine Providence».* (*Lettere I*, 139ff)



## From The Magisterium
## Papa Francesco

***Evangelii Gaudium §§ 12–13 — The Primacy of God and the Grateful Memory of Witnesses.***

Paragraphs 12 and 13 are found in the introduction to the Exhortation, in the section "Eternal Newness". Here Francis introduces the category of Deuteronomic memory: the believer is fundamentally "one who remembers". It is the foundation on which the whole module rests.

**12.** *Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord's work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is "the first and greatest evangeliser". In every activity of evangelisation, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. The real newness is the newness which God himself mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies in a thousand ways. The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that "he has loved us first" (1 Jn 4:19) and that he alone "gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:7). This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time he offers everything to us.*

**13.** *Nor should we see the newness of this mission as entailing a kind of displacement or forgetfulness of the living history which surrounds us and carries us forward. Memory is a dimension of our faith which we might call "deuteronomic", not unlike the memory of Israel itself. Jesus leaves us the Eucharist as the Church's daily remembrance of, and deeper sharing in, the event of his Passover (cf. Lk 22:19). The joy of evangelising always arises from grateful remembrance: it is a grace which we constantly need to implore. Together with Jesus, this remembrance makes present to us "a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1). The believer is essentially "one who remembers".*



## From The Magisterium
## Papa Leone Xiv

**_Dilexi te_ 1 and 3 - «I Have Loved You»: the Origin of Every Charism of Closeness.**

Paragraphs 1 and 3 open the Exhortation and establish its twofold foundation: Christ's declaration "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9) as the origin of every ecclesial charism that chooses the little ones; and the continuity between the pontificate of Francis and that of Leo XIV in proposing closeness to the poor as a path of sanctification.

1. *«I have loved you» (Rev 3:9). The Lord speaks these words to a Christian community that, unlike some others, had no influence or resources, and was treated instead with violence and contempt. This text reminds us of the words of the canticle of Mary: «He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty» (Lk 1:52-53).*

3. *2. For this reason, in continuity with the Encyclical Dilexit Nos, Pope Francis was preparing in the last months of his life an Apostolic Exhortation on the Church's care for the poor, to which he gave the title Dilexi te, as if Christ speaks those words to each of them, saying: "You have but little power," yet "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9). I am happy to make this document my own — adding some reflections — and to issue it at the beginning of my own pontificate, since I share the desire of my beloved predecessor that all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ's love and his summons to care for the poor.*

## Question for reflection

1. *What led me to choose to become an Orionine? Was fidelity to the Pope part of that original choice, or did it remain in the background? What does it mean for me, today, to start afresh from these roots?*

2. *Don Orione responded to a real crisis with a founding choice. Which ecclesial crisis do I feel closest to today? And what am I, concretely, doing to respond to it as an Orionine of the Pope?*

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you chose Peter and upon him you built your Church. Not for his strength, but for your grace. Not for his perfection, but because you prayed for him, that his faith might not fail.
Grant that we may recognise in this choice your fidelity to the Church of every age.



As Don Orione, through twenty-five years of labours and persecutions, never ceased to be "a humble, faithful and most loving son" at the feet of the Pope, so grant that we too may maintain this spirit of papalinità: not as a burden, but as a grace; not as an obligation, but as love.
Grant that our fidelity to your Vicar on earth may be the fruit of a great faith, of a great charity, of a great abandonment in Divine Providence.
Amen.

# Module 2

## The Masters



**Whom did we learn this love from?**

**Objective:** To recognise the spiritual tradition in which we stand.

Don Orione takes his place within a tradition spanning many centuries: Catherine of Siena, Ignatius of Loyola, Vincent de Paul, Rosmini, Don Bosco, each of them, in the moment of crisis of their own age, responded with a fidelity that is not conformism but charismatic prophecy.

Don Orione does not simply repeat this tradition: he transforms it. In nineteenth-century Catholicism, a "defensive papalism" was widespread, in which fidelity to the Pope was above all apologetic protection. Don Orione moves beyond this form: he passes from defence of the Pope to communion with the Pope; from external devotion to missionary co-responsibility. From the Jesuit world he inherits an apostolic dynamism, but directs it towards the abandoned poor. His sons would come to be called "Jesuits of the People".

The masters are not models to be reproduced, but witnesses who orient our gaze towards the one source. If Module 1 showed from what spiritual experience Don Orione's choice arose, here we recognise the ecclesial tradition that prepared and illuminated it. To recognise these roots means allowing oneself to be inspired by the same flame, not copying its historical form.

**Which models of fidelity shape my life today?**



## Invocation to the Holy Spirit

*Holy Spirit, Spirit of wisdom, you enrich the Church with diverse charisms and integrate them within the ecclesial body, drawing them towards the centre, who is Christ.*

*You raised up Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, Don Bosco and Don Orione, and in each of them you kindled a flame that still illuminates our path.*

*Come into us. Grant that we may not feel alone in the race, but surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses who guarded the faith before us and encourage us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.*

## From the Constitutions

Article 9 of the Constitutions describes Orionine spirituality as a constellation of interconnected attitudes. Love for the Pope does not appear here as an isolated element, but as integrated into a unified spiritual countenance: it is the heart of a way of being, not a separate norm.

**Art. 9 - *Our Spirituality***

*In order fully to respond to our special vocation:*

- *we feel ourselves, in Christ, to be children of the heavenly Father, and we abandon ourselves with faith to his loving Providence; for to be a child of Divine Providence means, in fact, to be a child of faith;*
- *we remember that Jesus Christ is loved and served on the cross, and crucified with him;*

- *we nourish great trust and most tender devotion towards Mary, as our Mother and heavenly Foundress: the Little Work is hers, it is the work of her maternal goodness;*
- *we love, with Jesus, the Church, our great mother, to whose service we feel dedicated;*
- *love and devotion to the Pope are the distinguishing characteristics of our Congregation: to live, to work and to die out of love for the Pope; this, and this alone, is the Little Work of Divine Providence;*
- *we adhere to the authority of the Bishops in their respective local churches, and we work in close collaboration with them, as well as with clergy and laity, conscious that we belong to the one people of God;*
- *we make our own the Founder's holy passion: not to the rich, but to the poor and to the poorest and to the people has the Lord sent me;*
- *we feel animated by an apostolic boldness, open and modern in its forms, which impels us, at the forefront of the times, to win souls for Christ, according to the Founder's cry: Souls! Souls!;*



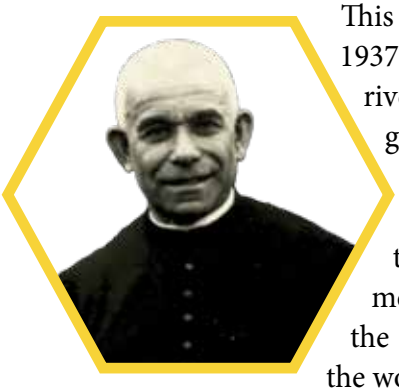
- *poor among the poor, our best-beloved, we obey the common law of labour, including manual labour; indeed, we wish to be apostles of work and of faith;*
- *a great family spirit must distinguish us — one of welcoming simplicity and holy joyfulness — so that we may spread goodness and serenity along all our paths and in the heart of every person we meet.*

## From Sacred Scripture

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews imagines the witnesses of the past not as memory, but as a living presence around the one who runs. They do not look down on us from above: they accompany us. The text that follows uses this image to make a single point: it is the fixed gaze on Jesus that allows us not to stop at the masters, even while running alongside them.

«With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection». (Heb 12:1-2)

## Don Luigi Orione



This is a letter written by Don Orione on 29 June 1937, the feast of Saint Peter, while sailing on the river Paraná towards Rosario de Santa Fé, in Argentina. Alone, on a river boat, far from all his communities, he writes to his sons, a single voice addressed to all of them. The solitude of the journey becomes contemplation: the fishermen's boats on the river bring to his mind Peter, the Papacy, the Little Work scattered throughout the world.

«*It is the feast of St Peter the Apostle, which has by now become the feast of the Pope. Since yesterday, and since one o'clock in the night, I have been sailing on the Paraná… This year, then, I spend the feast of the Apostle of the Faith and First Vicar of Christ on a river, where I have seen so many fishermen's boats. St Peter too was a fisherman, and Christ made him a fisher of men, and upon him built his Church. To him he gave the keys of the kingdom*

*of heaven and the power to confirm his brethren, the Bishops, in the faith: to him, then, the fullness of Faith and infallibility, since, in order always to be able to confirm others in the Faith, his own Faith could never fail, nor waver.*

*Such is Peter: infallible Master, of full authority: Shepherd of Shepherds: Primate of Honour and of Jurisdiction: Supreme Head, universal Father of souls and of peoples. And such is the Pope. The Pope is Peter: when the Pope speaks, Peter speaks; when Peter speaks, Christ speaks; to love the Pope is to love Peter, is to love Christ: in Peter, the Pope is celebrated, Christ is celebrated.*

*The Apostle Paul, and it is both my joy and my duty to cite St Paul, since the Church never separates the two Apostles, wrote to the Romans that he gave thanks to God because their Faith, the Roman Faith, is proclaimed throughout the whole world. We too, my sons, must give thanks to our God through Jesus Christ, since today the name of the Pope resounds, blessed, and is celebrated throughout the whole world.*

*Oh, the great joys of the Faith! How the Faith and love for the Pope make us feel, particularly on this feast, that the Catholic and Roman Church is truly the mystical Body of Christ, and that all things receive their unity and increase, their vigour and love, from Christ and from our Most Blessed Father, the Pope!*

*We wish for, we know no other master, nor any other light; we know not, nor we wish for any other Shepherd; we know not, nor wish for any other Father, nor any other public and visible Christ on earth: he, and he alone, the Pope, is the sweet Christ on earth, according to the expression of St Catherine of Siena.*

*Centuries have passed, and these words of Jesus echo through the ages and above all the storms of the world; these storms, furious and terrible against the Papacy and the Church, instead of overwhelming both Church and Papacy, made them the greatest spiritual and moral power in the world, and show, more and more each day, that Church and Papacy are the work of God, are the strength of God*».

(*Lettere II*, 485 ff)



## From The Magisterium
## Papa Francesco

***Evangelii Gaudium* §§ 130 e 263 - Charisms as Ecclesial Gifts; Learning from History's Witnesses.**

Paragraph 130 (Chapter Three) defines charisms as gifts of the Spirit for the whole Church, not the closed patrimony of a single group. Paragraph 263 (Chapter Five) offers a concrete invitation: to learn from the witnesses who went before us, without giving in to the temptation of thinking that today is more difficult.

**130.** *The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelising Church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the Church. They are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ, then channelled into an evangelising impulse. A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all. … Its ecclesial elements are more evident and it becomes richer in its interplay with other members of the Church.*

**263.** *We do well to keep in mind the early Christians and our many brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, unflagging courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel. Some people nowadays console themselves by saying that things are not as easy as they used to be, yet we know that the Roman empire was not conducive to the Gospel message, the struggle for justice, or the defence of human dignity. … Let us not say, then, that things are harder today; they are simply different.*

## Question for the reflection

1. *Is there a witness — from the past or close to us — who has shown me what it means to love the Pope with freedom and courage? What have I received from them, and what am I passing on to those who come after me?*
2. *As a community, is the Orionine charism handed on as a living tradition, or reduced to institutional style? Think of a young person, a novice, a cleric, a lay collaborator who lives alongside us: what are they learning, from our daily behaviour, about what it means to love the Pope?*

## Prayer

Father of all light, we thank you for the masters you have placed along our path.

For Don Orione, who learned love for the Pope at the foot of the Tabernacle and in his encounter with the poor.

For Catherine of Siena, who called the Pope "the sweet Christ on earth" and never ceased to love him, even when it was costly.

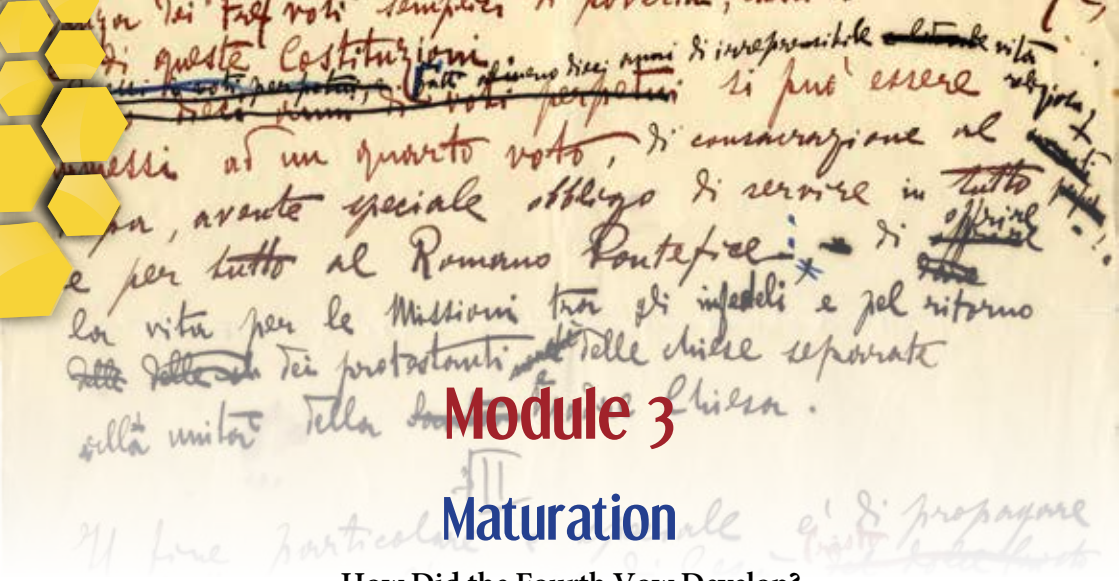



For Peter and Paul, who show us that fidelity to the Church is not uniformity, but unity in diversity.

Grant that our Congregation may be authentic in its charism: not a closed patrimony to be jealously guarded, but a gift of the Spirit to be offered to the Church in service to the little ones and the poor.

Grant that we may learn from the saints who went before us, without stopping at them, but letting ourselves be led, as they were, towards you.

Amen



# Module 3

## Maturation

### How Did the Fourth Vow Develop?

**Objective:** To understand the charismatic pedagogy of Don Orione.

The fourth vow took shape slowly. Don Orione carried this intuition in his heart from his seminary days onward; already, as a student of theology he sensed that the future Congregation would need to be wholly available to the Church and to the Pope. But what emerged initially was above all a spirit and a programme of life, not yet a formal commitment. The Constitutions of 1904, 1912 and 1936 progressively fixed its juridical form; and yet the vow was only formally introduced at the Eighth General Chapter of 1981. This is only an apparent paradox: life first, then the norm. First the experience lived by the Congregation, then its canonical definition. It is the same criterion by which the Introduction presented the whole course: a charism that becomes clear in life even before it does in juridical formulations.

The most decisive turning point is that of 1936. Initially, the fourth vow was reserved to the so-called "Special Section", a restricted group of religious particularly available for the needs of the Holy See.

In time, the risk emerged that this belonging might become an elite privilege. Don Orione understood that the special aim of the Little Work belonged to everyone. In 1936, **the fourth vow became the expression of the charismatic co-responsibility of the whole Congregation**: no longer the privilege of a few, but a responsibility shared by all.

Here it is worth distinguishing three things that are easily confused: the aim, the virtue, and the vow. Canon law itself suggests this, when CJC 1191 defines a vow as "a deliberate and free promise made to God of a possible and better good," to be fulfilled by the virtue of religion. The special aim, full availability to the Church and to the Pope, is the charism, and it was present from the beginning, before any constitutional article; the virtue is that same availability, lived and practised by the confreres long before anyone put it in writing; the vow comes last, as the promise that binds before God what was already being lived.

To read what was defined in the 1981 chapter, without this distinction, would lead to a misunderstanding: believing that something substantial was lacking before that date. This is not so. What was lacking was the form, not the life.

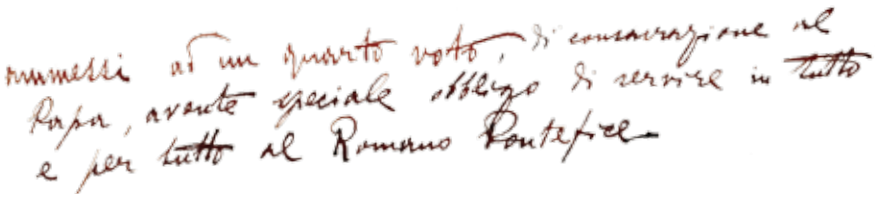
**What concrete witness of fidelity do we offer today?**

## Invocation to the Holy Spirit

*Holy Spirit, Spirit of truth,*
*you progressively guide the understanding of the mystery of Christ*
*throughout the history of the Church.*
*As you led the disciples,*
*step by step, towards the fullness of truth,*
*so you have guided the Congregation*
*from the first fire of its origins*
*to the solemn formulation of the vow,*
*decade after decade,*
*with the patience of God, who knows no haste*
*but knows fulfilment.*
*Come into us.*
*Teach us to trust in your timing.*

## From the Constitutions

Article 47 of the Constitutions constitutes the normative heart of the fourth vow: it defines its content in three essential directions: the full recognition of the Pope's hierarchical authority, unconditional adherence to his magisterium and his programme, and total availability for any service in any part of the world. The spirit animating this commitment will be explored more fully in Module 6, through Article 48.



**Art. 47.** ***The Vow***

*In our Congregation, the obedience owed to the Supreme Pontiff and the particular charism which distinguishes us find significant expression in the profession of the fourth vow of special fidelity to the Pope.*

*By it, we bind ourselves:*

- *to the full recognition of his hierarchical authority in the universal Church;*
- *to unconditional adherence to his magisterium and his programme;*
- *to the fullest availability for whatever he may determine concerning us, for any service in any part of the world, in order to realise the charism indicated in the motto: "Instaurare omnia in Christo; ut fiat unum ovile et unus Pastor" (*"To restore all things in Christ; that there may be one fold and one Shepherd"*).*

## From Sacred Scripture

The text that follows does not speak of norms to be observed; it speaks of what happens within us when we truly allow God to renew our way of thinking, guiding us progressively towards the fullness of truth.

*«I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come».*

(Jn 16:12-13)



*«I am confident of this much: that the One who began this good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Christ Jesus».*

(*Phil* 1:6)

## Don Luigi Orione

***Letter of the Constitutions of the FDP — Autograph of Don Orione, 22 July 1936***

This is the transcription of the autograph of Chapter I of the Constitutions, drafted by Don Orione in his own hand, on 22 July 1936, a few years before his death. It is the document in which he gathers into normative form the charismatic experience of almost forty years: he fixes the primary aim, the special aim, and formally introduces the fourth vow of consecration to the Pope. A dense and deeply considered formulation, the fruit of a long process of discernment.

«*The primary and general aim of this humble Congregation is the sanctification of its members, through the observance of the three simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and of these constitutions.*

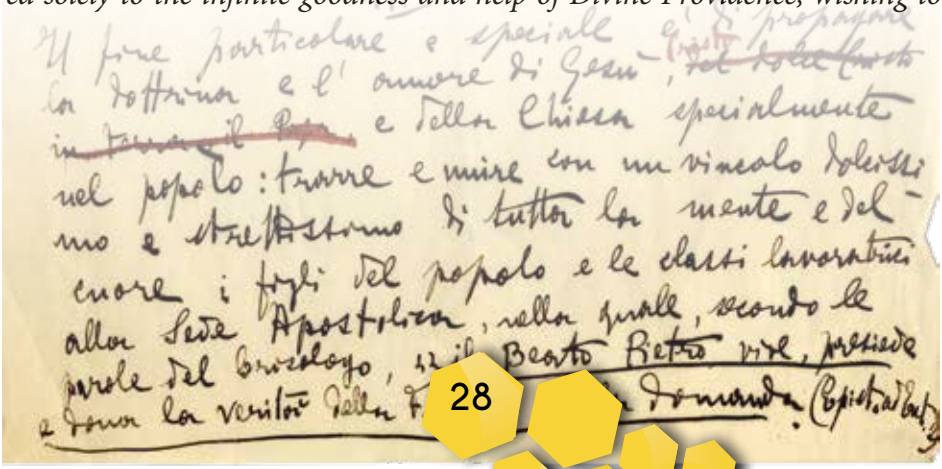
*The particular and special aim is to spread the doctrine and the love of Jesus Christ, of the Pope and of the Church, especially among the people; to draw and unite, with a most sweet and most close bond of the whole mind and heart, the children of the people and the working classes to the Apostolic See, in which, according to the word of Chrysologus, 'Blessed Peter lives, presides, and gives the truth of the Faith to whoever asks for it'.*

*And this through the apostolate of charity among the little ones and the poor, by means of those Institutions and Works of mercy best suited to the Christian education and formation of the children of the people, and to leading the crowds to Jesus Christ and to his Church.*

*Those Sons of Divine Providence who, having made perpetual vows, will have completed at least ten years of irreproachable religious life, may be admitted to a fourth vow, of consecration to the Pope, entailing a special obligation to serve the Roman Pontiff in all things and in every way.*

*They must live for nothing other than Holy Mother Church of Rome, vowed, per mysterium Crucis, to give her their whole heart, mind, blood and life, in a continuous and total sacrifice of self, offering daily prayers and mortifications, ut fiat unum ovile et unus Pastor.*

*Let it therefore remain firmly established that this Little Work — entrusted solely to the infinite goodness and help of Divine Providence, wishing to*



*conform itself, as perfectly as possible, to the example left by the Son of God - is for the poor, in whom it sees and serves Our Lord Jesus Christ, and wishes to be founded in humility. It consecrates itself to the evangelisation and salvation of abandoned or poor children and of the humble working classes, with the intention of modestly cooperating, at the feet of the Apostolic See and of the Bishops, to renew man and society in Jesus Christ, bringing to the Church and to the sweet Christ on earth the heart of the youth most in need, and of the people.» (Writings* 59, 27b)



## From The Magisterium
## Papa Francesco

***Evangelii Gaudium* 222–223 - «Time is Greater than Space»**

These paragraphs are found in Chapter Four, among the principles for the building of social peace. Here Francis sets out the principle: time is greater than space. This translates into working for the long term, initiating processes rather than possessing spaces.

**222.** *People live poised between each individual moment and the greater, brighter horizon of the utopian future as the final cause which draws us to itself. Here we see a first principle for progress in building a people: time is greater than space.*

**223.** *This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us patiently to endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans. It invites us to accept the tension between fullness and limitation, and to give a priority to time. One of the faults which we occasionally observe in sociopolitical activity is that spaces and power are preferred to time and processes. Giving priority to space means madly attempting to keep everything together in the present,*

*trying to possess all the spaces of power and of self-assertion; it is to crystallize processes and presume to hold them back. Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces. Time governs spaces, illumines them and makes them link together in a chain, without being bound to them, in order to move forward. What we need, then, is to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events. Without anxiety, but with clear convictions and tenacity.*

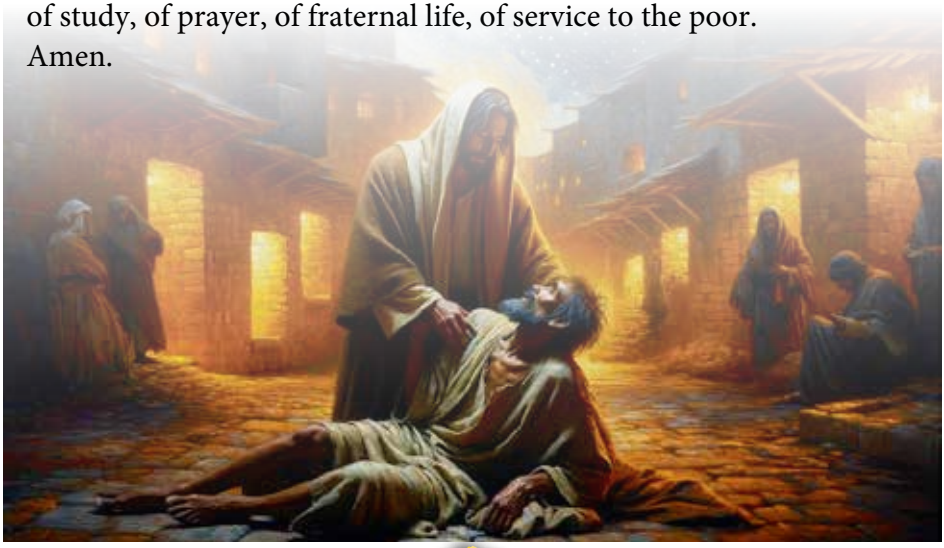
## Questions for reflection

1. *The fourth vow grew slowly over the history of the Congregation. In my spiritual life, do I know how to wait for the Spirit's timing, or do I always expect immediate results? What do I still need to allow to mature?*

2. *Life first, then the norm": to what extent is the fourth vow, for me, a lived reality and not merely a juridical commitment? What concrete changes has it produced in how I pray, how I work, how I choose?*

## Prayer

Lord of history,
you who bring to completion
the good work you have begun in us,
we ask you for the grace to know how to wait.
As Don Orione allowed the fourth vow
to mature in life before it did in the norm,
so grant that we too may not be in haste to possess the space,
but may know how to initiate processes, to trust the journey,
to keep the horizon before us.
When the Spirit does not yet reveal to us
all that we would wish to understand,
give us the faith of one who knows that
"he who began this good work in us
will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."
Grant that our fidelity to the Pope
may not be the fruit of a single, isolated act,
but of a long process of interior maturation,
of study, of prayer, of fraternal life, of service to the poor.
Amen.



# Module 4

## The unity of the Charism



*The Pope and the poor, one only flame*

**Objective:** To integrate the heart of the Orionine charism.

The founding intuition of the Orionine charism is not twofold but one: love for the Pope and service to the poor **form a single project, a single fire.** What was indicated in Module 1 as the logic of love from which the fourth vow arises finds here its full expression. For forty years, Don Orione did nothing but recall these two loves as the luminous and sure track upon which he set his religious family. These are not two parallel programmes: they are **a single love, a single Christ,** present in the Church and in the little ones.

The key lies in the relationship: love for Christ leads to the Church; love for the Church leads to the Pope; fidelity to the Pope leads to the poor. To invert this order is to misunderstand the charism. Fidelity to the Pope without the poor becomes abstract; charity without the Church becomes mere philanthropy. This is why Don Orione could say, «our politics is charity»: **this charity always takes the ecclesial form and the face of those most abandoned**.

**Does my service to the poor reveal the heart of the Church?**

## Invocation to the Holy Spirit



*Holy Spirit, Spirit of love,*
*you are the bond of unity*
*between the Father and the Son,*
*and you are the bond of unity*
*within the Church.*
*You revealed to Don Orione*
*that to love the Pope and to serve the poor*
*are not two separate choices:*
*they are a single flame,*
*a single love, a single Christ who is encountered*
*in the authority of the Church*
*and in the face of the little ones.*
*Come into us.*
*Keep us from dividing what you have united.*
*Grant that our charity may always*
*take the form of the Church*
*and the face of those most abandoned.*

## From the Constitutions

Article 5 is the most fully articulated foundational text on the unity of the charism. Here it is clearly seen that the special aim of the Congregation is not twofold but one: a single movement that brings to the Church and to the Pope the heart of those most abandoned, through the apostolate of charity.

**Art. 5.** ***Special Aim***

The special aim of the Congregation is to spread the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, of the Church and of the Pope, especially among the people; to draw and unite, with a most sweet and most close bond of the whole mind and heart, the children of the people and the working classes to the Apostolic See, in which, according to the words of Chrysologus, BLESSED PETER LIVES, PRESIDES, AND GIVES THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH TO WHOEVER ASKS FOR IT. And this by means of the apostolate of charity among the little ones and the poor, with those institutions and works of spiritual and corporal mercy best suited to the Christian education and formation of the youth most in need and of the people, with the intention of modestly cooperating, at the feet of the Apostolic See and of the Bishops, to renew and unify in Jesus Christ Our Lord man and society, bringing to the Church and to the Pope the heart of the most abandoned children, of the poor and of the working classes. AD OMNIA IN CHRISTO INSTAURANDA, UT FIAT UNUM OVILE ET UNUS PASTOR.

Let it therefore remain firmly established that the Little Work, entrusted solely to the infinite goodness and help of Divine Providence, wishing to conform itself, as perfectly as possible, to the example left by the Son of God, IS FOR THE POOR, in whom it sees and serves Our Lord Jesus Christ, and wishes to be founded in humility.

Questa umile Congregazione è per i poveri ed esclusivamente per i poveri.

## From Sacred Scripture

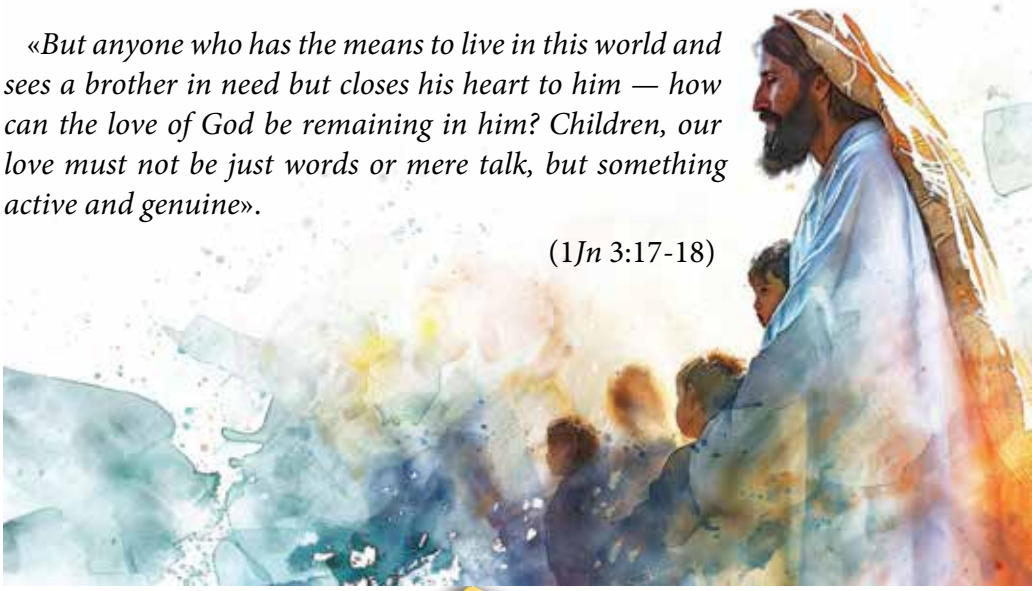
At the final judgement, Jesus asks neither for beliefs nor for affiliations: he asks what has been done for the poor. It is the most direct and uncomfortable text in the whole Gospel. We read it here because it says, in a way nothing else can surpass, because service to the little ones is not a work alongside the mission, it is the mission itself. St John confirms this for us clearly, calling us to make our faith active.

*«Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me… In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me».*

(*Mt* 25:34-36,40)

*«But anyone who has the means to live in this world and sees a brother in need but closes his heart to him — how can the love of God be remaining in him? Children, our love must not be just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine».*

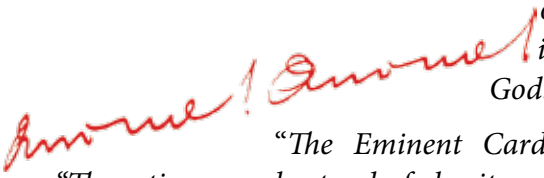
(1*Jn* 3:17-18)



## Don Luigi Orione

**The Exercise of Charity in Order to Unite to the Church — Tortona, 13 April 1920.**

*This text was written in Tortona on 13 April 1920, on the occasion of the jubilee anniversary of the founding of the Work and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Don Orione's priestly ordination. It is an organic meditation on the relationship between charity, the soul, the Church and the Pope: charity towards the poor cannot be separated from love for the Church, because it is only in this unity that it attains its end - leading society back to God.*



*"The Eminent Cardinal Parocchi already wrote: "These times, understand of charity only the means, and not the end and the principle. Tell the people of these times that souls that are being lost must be saved, those who are ignorant of the principles of religion must be instructed, alms must be given for the love of God… and people do not understand." But the first object of charity is souls, and souls can in no way live out this charity within themselves unless they remain united to the Church and to the Pope. Never as in our own times has the people been so detached from the Church and from the Pope, and so it is providential that this love has been reawakened by every possible means, so that the love of Jesus Christ may live once more in souls.*

*A man is what the idea he thinks and matures within himself makes him, and his actions are always conformed to that same idea by which he is guided. And so, the more deeply love for the Pope and for the Church is felt by those who, by reason of their ministry, are teachers of peoples, the more ardent will be the flame that stirs them to communicate this sentiment to souls — without which no sharing in supernatural life can take place; in this way the exercise of charity will perfectly attain its purpose, corresponding to the needs of our times, which is precisely this: to lead society back to God by reuniting it with the Pope and the Church.*

*And might one not say that, in the designs of God, this reunion finds a near preparation in that very social phenomenon of our own days which tends towards universal brotherhood? We see arising everywhere works of charity and institutions of assistance of every kind, notwithstanding the class hatred which seems bent on overturning every political, social and family order; and yet the need is felt more strongly than ever that all hatred be extinguished and love return to bring serenity to hearts.*

*Well then, when the Pope shall be recognised, with a sentiment of faith, as the universal father of peoples, and the Church shall once again be the enlightening Teacher of minds with her infallible doctrine, and shall once more cause the supernatural life which she pours forth to beat again in hearts, then a serene and secure peace will reign both in individuals and in society.*

*That charity, therefore, which is exercised in our society, taking its rise from love of the Pope and of the Church, and aiming at bringing about this love in all, is precisely that which best answers the need of the times. And such is the spirit that informs the Work of Divine Providence, such is its physiognomy, its typical character: Instaurare omnia in Christo!*

(*Nel nome della Divina Provvidenza,* p. 37)

## From The Magisterium
## Papa Francesco



***Evangelii Gaudium* §§ 198; 200 - The Option for the Poor is a Theological Category.**

Paragraph 198 grounds the option for the poor as a theological category before it is a sociological one; paragraph 200 specifies its form: the

worst discrimination against the poor is the lack of spiritual attention.

**198.** *For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor "his first mercy". This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind... which was in Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5). …. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the sensus fidei, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.*

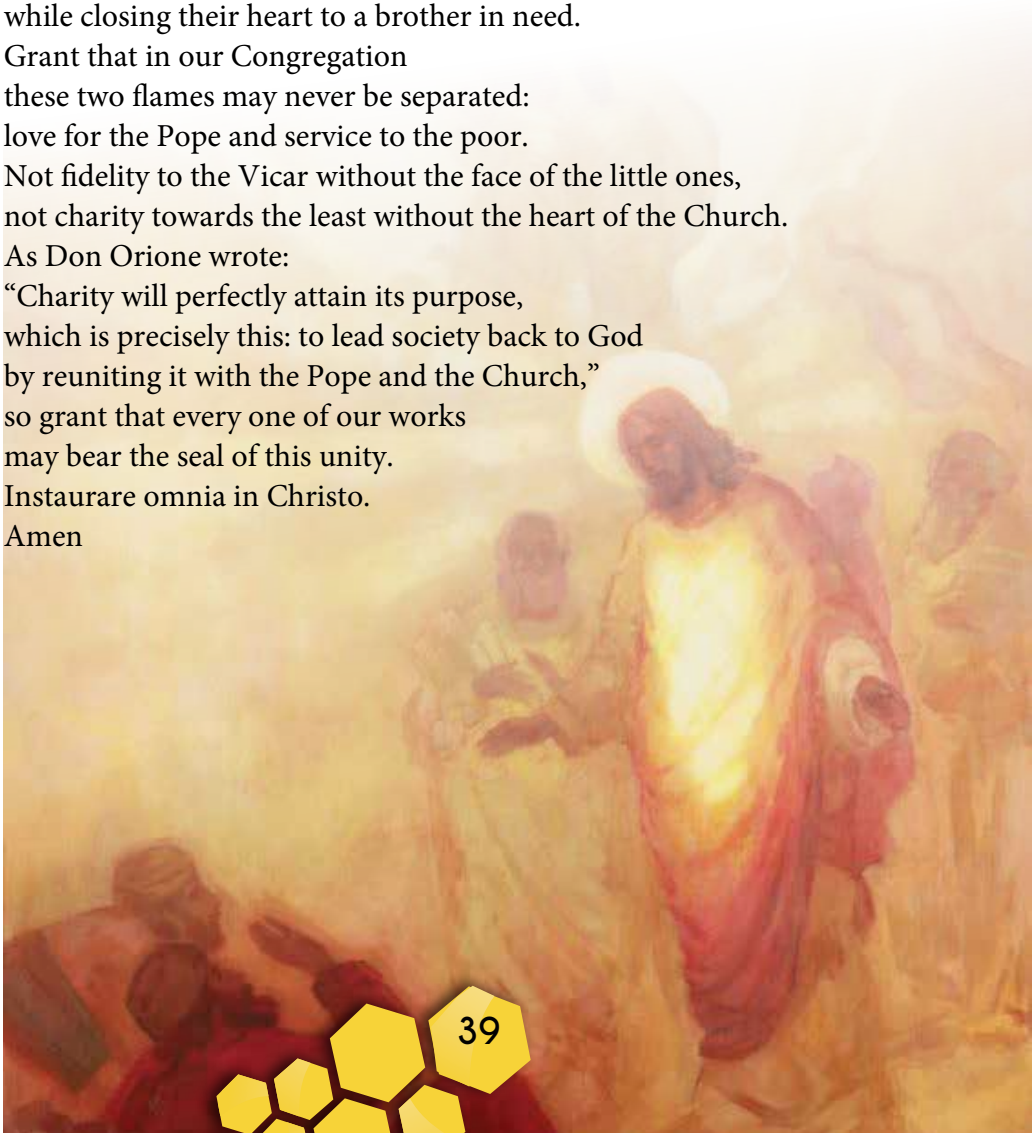
**200.** *I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care.*

## Questions for reflection

1. *In my service to the poor, is it evident that I am sent by the Church and faithful to the Pope, or might I appear simply as a social worker? What is missing, or what is already there, that is recognisably Orionine?*
2. *Does the fourth vow lead us concretely towards the poor, the least, and the existential peripheries, or does our religious life tend increasingly towards seeking stability, self-reference and the preservation of our works? Let us give a concrete example of something we need to change, and decide who will take responsibility for it.*

## Prayer

Lord Jesus,
you have revealed to us
that "whatever we have done to one of these,
the least of your brothers,
we have done it to you."
And you have shown us that no one can love God
while closing their heart to a brother in need.
Grant that in our Congregation
these two flames may never be separated:
love for the Pope and service to the poor.
Not fidelity to the Vicar without the face of the little ones,
not charity towards the least without the heart of the Church.
As Don Orione wrote:
"Charity will perfectly attain its purpose,
which is precisely this: to lead society back to God
by reuniting it with the Pope and the Church,"
so grant that every one of our works
may bear the seal of this unity.
Instaurare omnia in Christo.
Amen





# Module 5

## Relevance Today

*Why is the Fourth Vow More Urgent Today?*

**Objective: To discern the present time in an ecclesial way.**

In Don Orione's day, the Pope was contested chiefly from without: by Italian secularism, by freemasonry, by the political situation of the city of Rome, taken from the Pope and made capital of Italy. Who could have foreseen, then, that contestation would also arise from within the Church, from her own closest sons? This is the historical situation in which we now live: polarisation, murmuring, and opposing ideological readings, even within the Church.

In this context, **cc.** It does not serve to defend a person, nor is it enough merely to preserve communion as it stands: it is at the service of a Church that is on the move. The Pope is the visible principle of that unity which

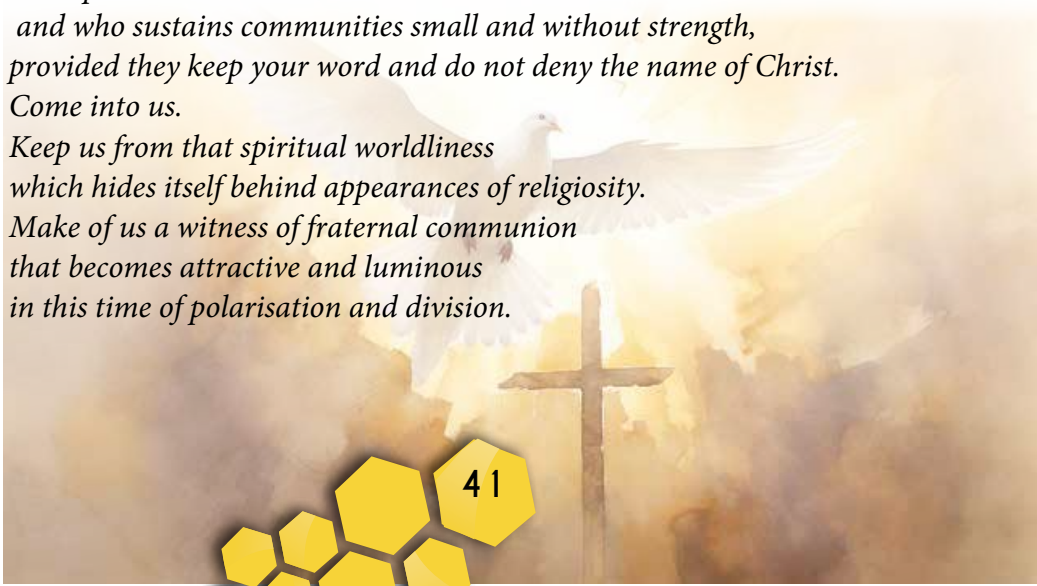
holds the people of God together as they advance towards the Kingdom, and fidelity to him is, therefore, a matter of accompanying the Church on her journey, without slowing her pace. That same unity between love for the Pope and service to the poor, described in Module 4, becomes today, in a time of division, a prophetic witness.

It is a fidelity that calls for maturity, balance and interior freedom: our most distinctive uniform, and our most uncomfortable one. The text of Don Orione that we shall read uses the language of total radicalness, charac-teristic of a founder who wishes to kindle in his sons the fire of belonging. It should be read not as blind militancy, but as the expression of that interior freedom which only a love without reservation can generate.

**Am I willing to walk with the Pope even when it is uncomfortable?**

## Invocation to the Holy Spirit

*Holy Spirit, Spirit of unity and of prophecy,*
*you keep watch over the communion of the Church*
*in every time of division and trial.*
*You are the one*
*who opens doors that no one can close,*
*and who sustains communities small and without strength,*
*provided they keep your word and do not deny the name of Christ.*
*Come into us.*
*Keep us from that spiritual worldliness*
*which hides itself behind appearances of religiosity.*
*Make of us a witness of fraternal communion*
*that becomes attractive and luminous*
*in this time of polarisation and division.*



## From the Constitutions

These three articles together sketch the concrete form of Orionine fidelity: Article 117 situates it at the heart of the apostolic mission; Articles 130 and 131 specify its quality, not merely juridical, but spiritual and affective, towards the Pope and towards the Bishops.

**Art. 117 - *A Specific Mission…***

In a Church that is wholly missionary, as bearers of a concrete charism, we recognise ourselves as called to a specific apostolic mission. In carrying out this mission, we commit all our strength and hold faithfully to the guidance and pastoral plans of the Church, so that, convinced that our apostolic action is exercised in the name of and by mandate of the Church, it may always be conducted by us in full communion with her.

**Art. 130 - *Submission to the Pope…***

The Sons of Divine Providence are subject to the Roman Pontiff as to their supreme superior. To him, not only by reason of the vow of obedience, but also by reason of the special spirit and purpose of the Congregation expressed through the fourth vow, they owe prompt obedience, profound respect and attachment, full submission and a living, sincere affection. In this same spirit, they accept the dispositions and directives of the Holy See, and conform to them with complete exactness and zeal.

**Art. 131 - *...and to the Bishops***

They are likewise submissive and filially obedient to the Bishops, in accordance with common law, towards whom they cultivate reverence and devotion, actively collaborating in the implementation of the pastoral plans of the local Church.

## From Sacred Scripture

***Jn 17:20-21 — That They May All Be One; Rev 3:7-8 — You Have Little Strength, and Yet You Have Kept My Word.***

Jesus prays on the night he is to be betrayed. And he prays for unity - not of the Twelve alone, but of all who will believe. It is a prayer that crosses the centuries and reaches every religious community.

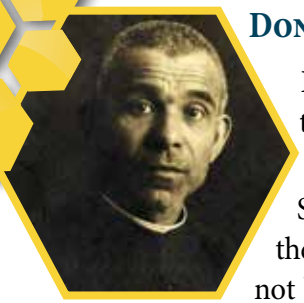
«*I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me*».

(Jn 17:20-21)



«And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'Here is the message of the holy and the true one, who has the key of David, so that whatever he opens, no one else can close, and whatever he closes, no one else can open: I know all about your activities. Look, I have opened a door in front of you which no one will be able to close, since, though you have not much power, you have kept my word and not disowned my name».

(Rev 3:7-8)



## Don Luigi Orione

**Letter from Buenos Aires, 7 August 1935 — Consummation for Christ, for the Pope and the Church, in Charity.**

This letter was written on 7 August 1935, the feast of St Cajetan, to the Sons of the Congregation gathered for their Spiritual Exercises in Buenos Aires. Don Orione could not be present, but he accompanies them with this text, paternal and direct in tone. At its centre: the meaning of religious life as total consecration to Christ, to the Pope and to the Church, lived out in the concrete observance of the Constitutions and in perseverance to the end.

[…] «*To this holy Mother Church, and to her Head, sole and universal, Shepherd of shepherds, Bishop of Bishops, the one and only Vicar on earth of Jesus Christ, to the Pope, I and you have given ourselves for life and for death, to live by his faith, by his love, in full obedience and discipline to him, with a devotion that is full and filial, second to none.*

*Our most special task is to make him known, to make him loved, especially by the people and by the children of the people; it is to live at his feet, and to yearn and labour to lead everyone, not merely to his feet, but to his fatherly heart for souls and for peoples!*

*We have therefore consecrated ourselves to Jesus Christ, to the Pope, to the Church, to the Bishops, to give them love, help, comfort, as their most humble and most devoted servants and sons, with a decided and irrevocable will to sacrifice ourselves wholly for them, to immolate ourselves for the Pope and for the Church. By our holocaust, by our consummation for the Pope and for the Church, we wish for nothing other than to draw the humble, the little ones, the crowds, to the Pope and to Holy Church: we wish to unite everyone in Christ, in the Pope and in the Church.*

*We have put our hand to the plough: let none of us turn back… It will cost us sacrifices, it will cost us toil, it will cost us hardship, hunger, thirst, and perhaps humiliations: we must stand firm and remain faithful, but even should it cost us our life, let no one abandon the vocation! God will help us!*» (*Lettere II*, p. 299ss)

## From the Magisterium
## Pope Francis



***Evangelii Gaudium* §§ 93; 99–100 - «*No to Spiritual Worldliness*» *and* «*No to Warring Among Ourselves*».**

two internal pathologies of ecclesial life: spiritual worldliness, which hides behind appearances of religiosity; and warring among ourselves, extending even to internal persecutions among consecrated persons.

**93.** *Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-beinge.*

**99.** «*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*» (*Jn* 13:35). … *Beware of the temptation of envy! We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all.*

**100.** *Seeing testimony of authentically fraternal and reconciled communities brings great light to all of us. For this reason, it distresses me to see how in some Christian communities, and even among consecrated persons, we allow room for different forms of hatred, division, calumny, defamation, vengeance, jealousy, a desire to impose certain ideas at all costs, and even persecution that looks like a veritable witch hunt. Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?*

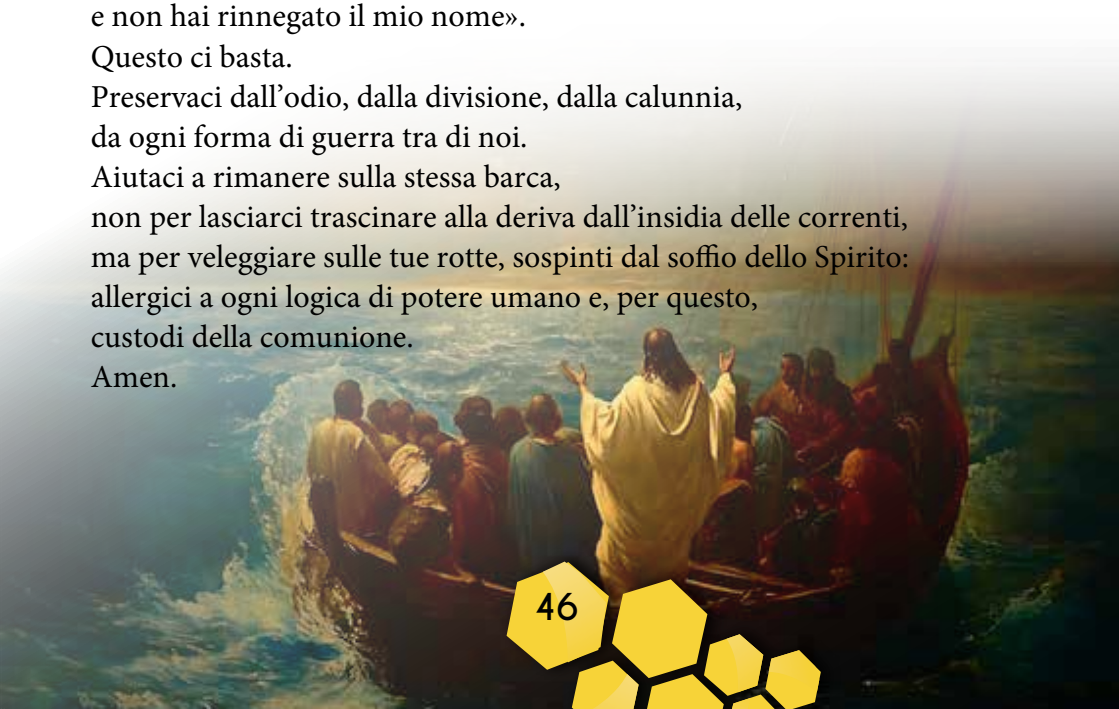
## Questions for reflection

1. *1.Today, contestation of the Pope often comes from within the Church herself. How do I live this situation: with suffering, with patient dialogue, with defensive closure? Does the fourth vow help me to remain within this tension, or does it weigh on me?*

2. *Does our way of living the mission truly arise from communion with the Church and with the Pope, or does it risk being guided chiefly by our own personal preferences, ideological sensitivities or ap-ostolic se-curities?*

## Prayer

Signore Gesù,
nella notte prima della tua passione hai pregato
perché tutti siano una cosa sola.
Questa preghiera attraversa i secoli e giunge fino a noi.
In un tempo in cui le divisioni lacerano anche la tua Chiesa,
fa' che il nostro quarto voto sia profezia:
non difesa di un potere umano,
ma custodia della comunione per cui tu hai pregato.
Come la comunità di Filadelfia,
anche noi abbiamo poca forza.
Ma tu ci dici: «hai osservato la mia parola
e non hai rinnegato il mio nome».
Questo ci basta.
Preservaci dall'odio, dalla divisione, dalla calunnia,
da ogni forma di guerra tra di noi.
Aiutaci a rimanere sulla stessa barca,
non per lasciarci trascinare alla deriva dall'insidia delle correnti,
ma per veleggiare sulle tue rotte, sospinti dal soffio dello Spirito:
allergici a ogni logica di potere umano e, per questo,
custodi della comunione.
Amen.



# Module 6

# Life



*How is this Vow Lived out Concretely?*

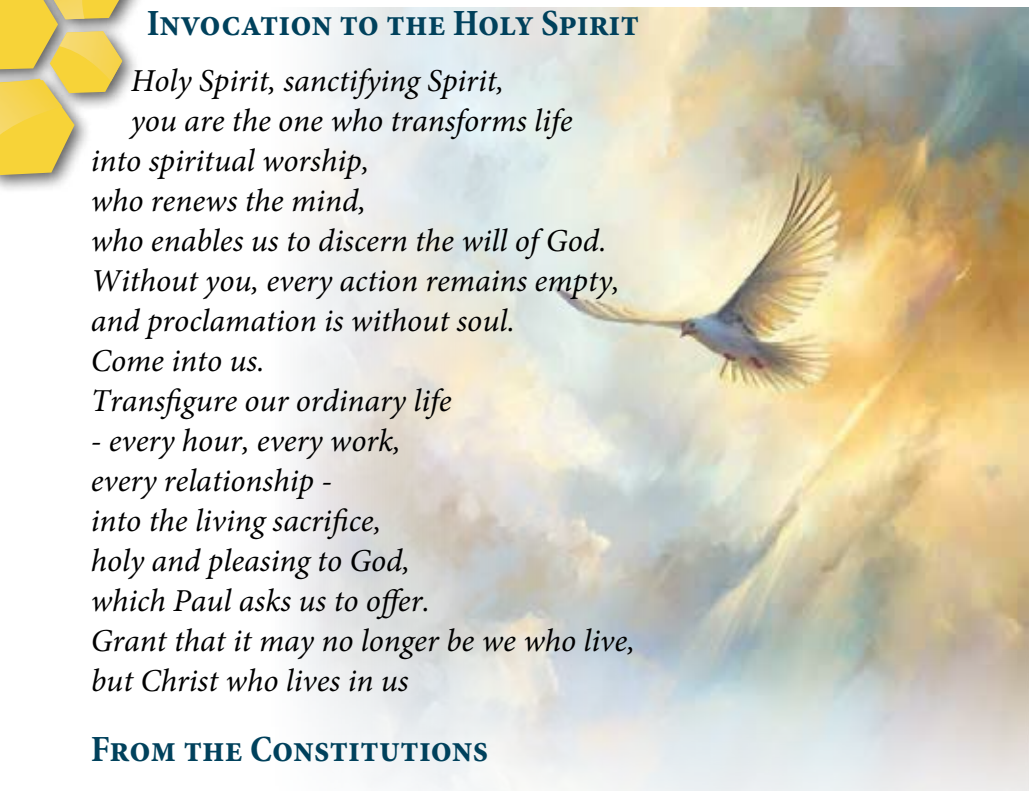
**Objective:** To translate the charism into a daily style of life.

The fourth vow is not an idea, but **a form of life**: prayer for the Pope, attentiveness to the Magisterium, fraternal unity, service to the poor, mis-sionary openness. If Module 5 showed why this fidelity is urgent today, this concluding module asks us to translate it into daily, verifiable actions. Don Orione always looked first to doing rather than to saying: for him, the vow is truly understood only by embodying it — in the concrete ob-servance of the Constitutions, in humble service, in daily perseverance. As he wrote to his sons gathered for their Spiritual Exercises: it is not enough to know the rules, one must live them "with diligence and a good spirit," not in a "purely material way, but from the heart."

Ecclesial fidelity, then, is verified in precise actions: in closeness to the least, in missionary availability, in fraternal dialogue, in the capacity to safeguard unity. **An Orionine who lives the fourth vow is recognisable not by what he says about the Pope, but by how he draws near to the abandoned** and how he builds communion with his brothers. This is the style that Art. 48 of the Constitutions sets out in six concrete directions, and which this module asks us to verify in everyday life.

**In what concrete ways can those who live alongside me recognise an Orionine style?**

## Invocation to the Holy Spirit



*Holy Spirit, sanctifying Spirit,*
*you are the one who transforms life*
*into spiritual worship,*
*who renews the mind,*
*who enables us to discern the will of God.*
*Without you, every action remains empty,*
*and proclamation is without soul.*
*Come into us.*
*Transfigure our ordinary life*
*- every hour, every work,*
*every relationship -*
*into the living sacrifice,*
*holy and pleasing to God,*
*which Paul asks us to offer.*
*Grant that it may no longer be we who live,*
*but Christ who lives in us*

## From the Constitutions

Article 48 translates the fourth vow into a concrete programme of life, set out in six directions. Article 122 broadens the horizon to ecclesial col-lab-oration: fidelity to the Pope is lived not in isolation, but in a union of strength with the whole Church journeying towards the Kingdom.

**Art. 48.** ***Spirit of the Vow***

*The vow commits us to a constant effort in these directions:*

- *fidelity to the Church, of which the Pope is the centre of com-munion;*
- *study, deepening and implementation of the ordinary magisterium; knowledge and dissemination of pontifical documents and those of the Roman Congregations;*
- *love for and adherence to the Bishops in the local churches;*
- *work for communion, within and beyond the Church, labouring to be a leaven of unity;*

- *missionary and ecumenical commitment;*
- *preferential service to the poor, whose rights and claims we shall defend, in the name of the Pope and in fidelity to him.*

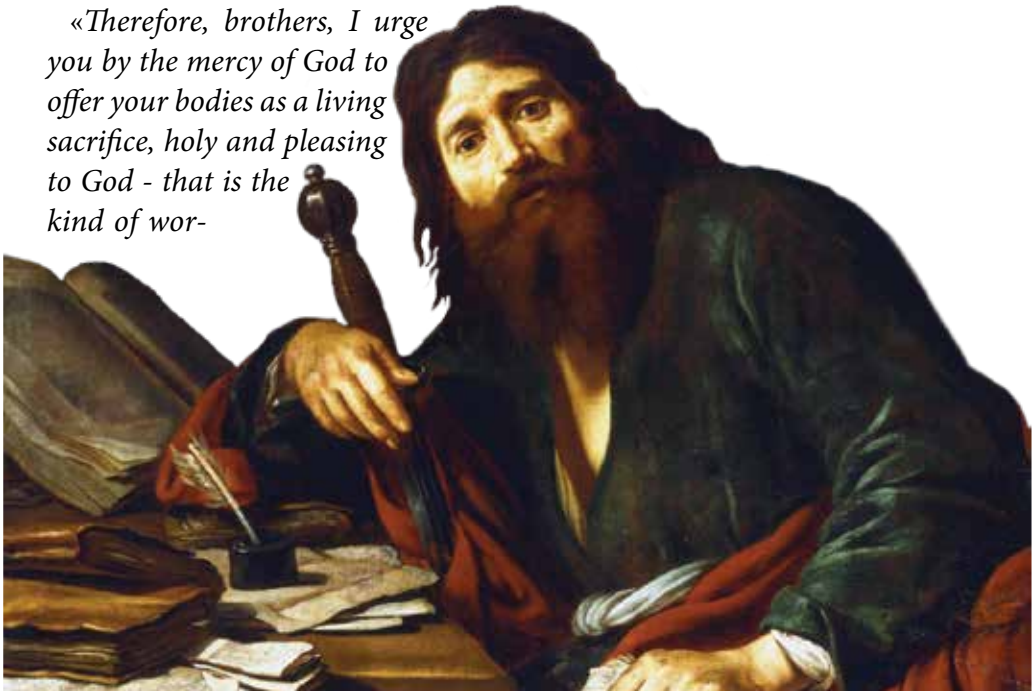
**Art. 112.** ***Ecclesial Collaboratione***

*In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of apostolate, we are subject to the authority of the Bishops, to whom, also by reason of our particular spirit, we owe devoted respect and reverence. Since one of the most pressing demands of the apostolate is unity of pastoral action throughout the Church and within particular churches, under the authority of the Pope and of the Bishops, we proceed in a union of strength and will with other Religious Institutes, with the diocesan clergy and with the laity, towards the common goal, which is the coming of the Kingdom of God.*

## From Sacred Scripture

The text that follows tells us what this means in concrete terms: to remain attached to Christ is not an additional effort, but a condition of life that transfigures every ordinary action.

«*Therefore, brothers, I urge you by the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - that is the kind of wor-*

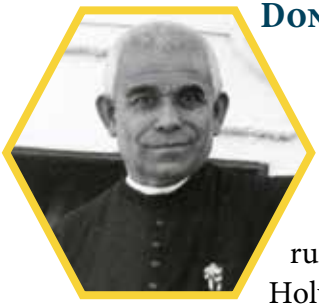


*ship for you, as sensible people. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do».*

(*Rom* 12,1-2)

*«Non vivo più io, ma Cristo vive in me. E questa vita, che io vivo nel corpo, la vivo nella fede del Figlio di Dio, che mi ha amato e ha consegnato se stesso per me».*

*(Gal 2,20)*



## Don Luigi Orione

**Prayer, Work, Temperance - Rome, 7 February 1923, Feast of St Romuald, Abbot.**

This is a letter written from Rome on 7 February 1923 to the sons of the Congregation in the Holy Land. Don Orione writes in a paternal and direct tone, concerned not with extraordinary fervour but with daily steadfast-ness: morning prayer, faithful work, temperance, dependence on superiors. Three words - *oratio, labor, temperantia* - become the concrete pro-gramme of Orionine life, even before they become its ideal.

*Prayer, work and temperance are three most precious pearls, which must shine upon the brow and in the life of every Son of Divine Providence. Prayer, work and temperance: this is what will truly make our dear Congregation flourish.*

*Oratio, labor et temperantia! — which means: piety, sacrifice, mortifi-cation!*

*Oratio, labor et temperantia! — which means union with God, labouring for souls, mortifying the body with its passions, and mortifying the palate.*

*Oratio, labor et temperantia! — which means the whole life of the Sons of Divine Providence! In these three virtues lies the whole of our life!*

*There is no other life for us. There is no other way to make us holy. There is no other, nor any better, way to love and serve God: to imitate Jesus Christ, truly to serve Holy Church and the Pope. There is no other, nor any better, way to imitate Our Lady, to be truly devoted to her, to love her in earnest! There is no other way to serve and save souls! There is no other way to be true and holy Religious. […]*

*Humility, not in words but in deeds; piety, not in words but in deeds; self-denial, not in words but in deeds; the flight from idleness, not in words but in deeds; docility of intellect, docility of heart, not in words but in deeds.*

(*Lettere I*, 463ff)

## From The Magisterium
## Papa Francesco



***Evangelii Gaudium* §§ 259; 262; 273 - The Spirit-Filled Evangeliser.**

Francis outlines the profile of the missionary as one whose life is trans-figured by an encounter with God; not an official, not an activist, but someone who is a mission.

**259.** *Spirit-filled evangelisers means evangelisers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our mes-*

*sage empty. Jesus wants evangelisers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence.*

**262.** *We need to be certain that we do not misuse Christian conscience formation to justify ourselves; there is no place for a purely spiritual disposition without robust social and missionary commitment, just as there is no place for talk and social or pastoral practices devoid of a spirituality which changes hearts. It is always necessary to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful en-counter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out.*

**273.** *Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realise that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realise once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity.*

## Questions for reflection

1. If you had to name one concrete action, just one, that expresses in your day fidelity to the Pope and to the poor, what would it be? Do you live it consciously, or has it become a habit emptied of meaning?
2. *In our communities, does the fourth vow generate communion, co-responsibility and fraternal charity, or does the way we speak about the Church, the Pope and the Congregation feed division, complaint and closed-mindedness?*

3. *As a community, what do we still lack in order truly to be a school of the fourth vow for one another — not only in declaring it, but in concretely helping each other to live it every day?*

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you called Don Orione to consume himself for you, for the Pope and for the Church, in charity towards the poor.
He could answer: "we have put our hand to the plough; let none of us turn back."
Grant that we too may live the fourth vow in this way: not as an ornament that we can set aside, not as an appendage to our life, but as life itself, as something we cannot uproot from our being without destroying ourselves.
Teach us to pray for the Pope every day. To study his magisterium with fidelity and interior freedom. To live in community as true brothers, bearing with one another, giving one another good example and building each other up. To serve the poor with the same affection with which we serve you.
May those who live alongside us recognise in us an Orionine style: not by what we say, but by what we are.
Amen
.






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