

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF STS BARTOLOMEA CAPITANIO & VINCENZA GEROSA

XXVI GENERAL CHAPTER - 9TH MAY - 15TH JUNE, ROME.

The assembly, made up of 68 sisters coming from Africa, Asia, America and Europe, represents the whole Institute and expresses the catholicity of the Church. All prepared to listen to the voice of the Lord through the reports of the Superior general and major Superiors, to hear of His wonders in the prophetic force of Charity at work in the world, and to respond to His appeal for the years ahead.

The intense Chapter days suddenly offered us a happy surprise, on 8 May. We took it as a special gift from God, speaking to us through the Successor of St Peter and through artistic beauty. As we participated at the audience of Pope Benedict XVI, seeing him and having him among us, listening to him together with sisters of other Congregations and so many people coming from all parts of the world, filled us with the joy, the awe and wonder of being church, living Body of Christ, and united in faith under His representative on earth. We were happy and grateful to have his blessing, which we now wish to extend to all those we care for, dear ones who at that moment were in our mind **and heart**.

For us, the Pope had a particular, gracious greeting:



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greet you,



Sisters of

Maria Bambina, and gladly join you in your gratitude to God for the gifts received these days during which you have reflected together on the present and future of your Institute. May Saints Bartolomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa obtain for you the gift of an ever more fruitful and joyful living up to the evangelical counsels".



Mother Annamaria, 12TH Superior general of sisters of charity, *in the name of all of us, assured him of our loyalty and affection and once again asked from him a blessing on the entire Institute.*

In the afternoon, so refreshed in faith and in communion we had the privilege of paying a visit to the Vatican Palace, in particular to 'Redemptoris Mater' Chapel, the Sistine Chapel and the Paoline Chapel. Monsignor Giuseppe Scotti patiently guided us into a good understanding of the artistic and spiritual splendour that they hold. While our eyes feasted on their exquisite beauty, our heart made room for the witnessing to the Faith they represent, and was further enriched by the desire to celebrate beauty in all its forms and everywhere, to-day.