Homily at Mass for Simple Professions at Saint Peter's (Gospel: Mt. 5:1-12a)
Father Marie-Dominique Phillipe, O.P.

My beloved brothers, ask the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, Saint Peter, and Saint John to be very near you to help you commit yourselves to this great mystery of the evangelical beatitudes. We cannot separate the beatitude of the peacemakers from that of the meek or the merciful. Nevertheless the Holy Spirit will especially sanctify each of you by way of one or the other, and often there will be two beatitudes which will be, as it were, divinely "paired."
When you want to commit yourselves to follow Saint John, some of the beatitudes appear in a special way. And in the depths of your heart you carry these beatitudes as a particular secret which unites you to Jesus in a very intimate way.

The greatness of the gesture that you are about to make is to say to Jesus, from the depths of your heart, that you love Him above all else, more than anything, more than all the people whom you can love, and that you desire to walk in His footsteps. This is the beatitudes; it is the little mountain path where one hardly has room to pass since it is so narrow and sometimes so steep. But you like this. The Lord has placed this in your heart, and that is why you are here. You are not taking the freeway. Mark this well: you are taking a very steep, very hard little path where Jesus alone goes, and where Mary, following Him, lets you look at both the obstacles and the little flowers. And Saint John is there to help you. Accept the fact that it is a narrow path that you are taking, yet a wonderful path since it is the love of the heart of Christ that you desire. Your profession consists in promising Jesus to "remain with Him" (cf. Jn. 1:39), to "remain in his love" as He Himself has asked us (cf. Jn. 15:9). Canonically this is for three years, but Canon Law is not our life; it is the rampart which is there so that one does not deviate too far, but this is not what seizes our heart. What seizes our heart is the attraction of the heart of Christ. It is also the strength of the heart of Mary and the heart of Saint John, but it is above all this attraction of the heart of Christ. This is the life which you will now enter by your profession. You are leaving the privileged time of the novitiate, yet you preserve its fervor by understanding that in this heartfelt love that has marked your novitiate, and that will last, you must--God expects this of you-- make positive acts of love and the will. You must take initiatives in order to go more quickly, to go further, to give yourselves totally.

Since it is here, close to Saint Peter, on the Feast of All Saints, that you take your first vows, you receive a very particular grace to follow Jesus upon this narrow path where there are innumerable companions, all the saints of heaven who are here today, and

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Saint John who gives you a hand and who will show each of you what Jesus expects of you. Profession is a personal bond of love with Jesus. It is telling Jesus that you love Him above all else, and it is telling your brothers that you love them and that you do not want to leave them, that you want to walk with them, following Jesus and beside Him, knowing that your bond with Jesus is unique and that He will show you more and more this unique bond He wants to have with you. And the Virgin Mary is here. She who is Queen and Mother of all the saints maternally receives you today, despite your weaknesses and your fragility. Mary is here enveloping you in her love, and we are all here with her. Your parents as well, even if it is a sacrifice for them to offer you to Jesus. Yet it is a sacrifice of joy because they know that they are not losing you in giving you to Jesus. They will be repaid a hundredfold, and this hundredfold is your love for them; you yourselves will carry them, help them, care for them.
May this gesture of love that you make today be with joy, with great joy.

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