



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION
IN DUNCUNHA STADIUM

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Maumere (Indonesia)
Wednesday, 11 October 1989*

1. *Saudara-Saudara yang terkasih dalam Yesus Kristus,*

Saya begitu gembira dapat mempersembahkan kurban Ekaristi - yang merupakan pusat dan puncak dari kesatuan kita - di bumi Maumere yang terberkati ini, berkumpul sebagai umat Allah bersama Santo Bapa dan Para Uskup dari daerah ini, termasuk gembala Keuskupan Agung Ende, Monsignor Donatus Djagom. Pada hari ini nyatalah kasih persaudaraan kita.

“Who is like the Lord, our God,
who has risen on high to his throne
yet stoops from the heights to look down,
to look down upon heaven and earth?” (Ps. 113 (112), 5-6)

The psalmist sings of the greatness of God, the God whose praise is chanted by all creation. He is the Creator in whom all things have their origin – “in whom we live and move and have our being” (cfr. Act. 17, 28). *Man bears witness to God, in whose image he is created.* Man proclaims God’s holiness, his power, his wisdom. He proclaims God’s merciful love: the love that “stoops from the heights” to look down upon human suffering and humiliation:

“From the dust he lifts up the lowly,
from his misery he raises the poor

to set him in the company of princes,
yes, with the princes of his peoples” (Ps. 113 (112), 7-8).

In the great act of adoring God there is one who excels all others: Mary – she who was chosen to be the earthly Mother of God’s Son, the Eternal Word.

When she visited the house of Elizabeth, her kinswoman, the Virgin of Nazareth joins the Psalmist in praising *the God who puts down “the mighty from their thrones” and exalts “the lowly”,* who fills “the hungry with good things” and sends “the rich away empty” (Cfr. *Luc.* 1. 52-53). Her song is the “Magnificat”, which the Church repeats from generation to generation. At every Evening Prayer we make this hymn our own:

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is on those who fear him” (*Ibid.* 1, 45-47. 49-50).

2. Since Mary is the Mother of Christ, *her witness to her Son is unique.* She alone experienced the mystery of the Incarnation at the very moment of conception. She gave birth to her Son *at Bethlehem.* She gave him the name Jesus, which means “Saviour”. She offered him to the Lord in the Temple forty days after his birth. Together with Joseph she protected him from King Herod’s cruelty by fleeing into Egypt. *In the house at Nazareth* she watched Jesus “increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man” (Cfr. *Luc.* 2, 52). And when Mary found her divine Son at the age of twelve in the Temple, he told her that *he had “to be about his Father’s business”* (Cfr. *ibid.* 2, 49). Her heart awaited the realization of his “business” in keeping with her words at the Annunciation: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (*Ibid.* 1, 38).

The Gospel of today’s liturgy recalls an event which took place during a wedding *at Cana,* where for the first time *Mary bore public witness to the divine power of her Son.* She says to him, “They have no wine” (*Jo.* 2, 3). Even though he seems to respond negatively, Mary is confident of her Son’s goodness and says to the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Ibid.* 2, 5). When the servants carry out Jesus’ command, the water with which they had filled the jars proves to be excellent wine. So it was that *at Cana in Galilee Jesus performed “the first of his signs”* (*Ibid.* 2, 11) which revealed the true nature of his person and mission.

At the foot of the Cross, a new phase begins in Mary’s witness to Jesus. When Mary was given to the beloved disciple as his Mother, she was also given to the Church. She devotes herself to prayer with the apostles in the Upper Room, while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And *when the apostles,* having received “power from on high” (*Luc.* 24, 49), left the

Upper Room in Jerusalem to bear witness to Christ Crucified and Risen, *the example and intercession of the Lord's Mother accompanied them everywhere*. This unique witness continues to strengthen the Church from generation to generation.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, in the course of time the praises of Mary's faith also reached your beloved *Island of Flores*, the Island of Flowers. It was the Portuguese who founded the first Christian communities here in the sixteenth century. Those beginnings were not easy. Many priests, religious and laity gave their lives for the faith through martyrdom. In difficult times the laity continued to hold fast to that faith even when priests and religious were not readily available. In this regard I gladly recall the recent celebrations in the Diocese of Amboina of the centenary of the return of the Church to that province of the Moluccas.

Today *you are continuing* that faithful witness to Christ *through your daily efforts to live the Gospel* in the holiness of family life, in building a better society, in strengthening the love that should always mark the life of the ecclesial community. As active members of your local Churches, you involve yourselves in your *parishes*, in the *lay apostolate*, and in the *efforts that are being made to strengthen Christian family life*. Many gifts of the Spirit are to be found among you for building up Christ's Body, the Church, and for transforming the world from within with the power of God's love. With Mary we rejoice at all the wonderful things that God has done in your midst in the past four hundred years.

A particular sign of your faithfulness is the increasing number of your sons and daughters generously dedicated to God's service as priests and religious. Many of them are the missionaries of today, who preach God's word in all Indonesia and even in other countries.

Mary's prayers accompany you on your pilgrimage of faith. Your loving response to her maternal care is expressed in your devotion to "*Tuan Ma*" at Larantuka, to Mother Mary of Fatima at Lela and Watulaji, to Mother Mary of Lourdes at Detusoko, and to Holy Mary Patroness of the Missions at Cancar. This devotion has been rooted for centuries in the mind and heart of your people. I recall that, among other things, in the eighteenth century the King of Larantuka entrusted his kingdom to Mother Mary, *Reinha Rosari* and *Reinha Larantuka*. Solemn acts of dedication also took place at Lela and Sikka in 1947 and again at Sikka in 1949.

Thus the long history of the Church in Nusa Tenggara Timur is *filled with the presence of Mary*, who intercedes with her Son for you and urges you to "do whatever he tells you" as the Gospel says.

4. What is Christ asking of you today? *What does it mean to bear witness to him?* It means to communicate divine life to the world, to heal and elevate the dignity of the human person, to build up society in justice, peace and love. It means to bring a deeper meaning and a higher purpose to temporal concerns and daily activities (Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 40).

Dear brothers and sisters, as Catholics and Indonesians you are taking *a full part in the life of your country* by working courageously to promote the common good and to remedy social problems. It is above all *the laity* who are called to illumine and organize temporal affairs, *imbuing them with the spirit of the Gospel*, so that the whole life of the community may effectively uphold and promote the dignity and rights of its members. You understand the enormity of the task facing your country in providing better education and training, more jobs and just wages, and a more equitable distribution of the advantages of economic and cultural development. Here in Nusa Tenggara Timur you also have an opportunity to cooperate in the *Operassi Nusa Makmur* in order to safeguard and improve the environment.

Society has a pressing need of your authentic witness to those values which are capable of transforming it for the benefit of all. Your Christian faith urges you to be involved in this great undertaking to the full measure of your talents and resources, and in harmony with the social doctrine of the Church.

At the same time faith tells us that we can effectively promote unity and cooperation in society only if *we ourselves are reconciled with God and neighbour*. We find the path to authentic human development if we recognize the importance of spiritual realities in our lives and our need to turn away from selfishness and sin. It is a process which begins with *our own spiritual conversion*. Mary proclaimed the true meaning of all human existence when she called herself “the handmaid of the Lord”. We too must recognize that *we are creatures in the service of God's loving plan*, called to live a life worthy of our supernatural vocation.

5. “Praise, O servants of the Lord,
praise the name of the Lord” (Ps. 113 (112), 1).

Yes, among all God's servants it is Mary, *the handmaid of the Lord*, who excels in the adoration offered to God by peoples and nations, by the whole human family.

“From the rising of the sun to its setting
praised be the name of the Lord” (*Ibid.* 3).

The Mother of Christ proclaims everywhere the “great things” that the Almighty has accomplished in her. “From generation to generation” *she bears witness to God's love for the world*. Indeed, he loved the world so much “that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (*Io.* 3, 16).

Mary, the Mother of this Son in the mystery of the Incarnation, *never ceases* to intercede with him for *our salvation*. Here on the Island of Flores she never ceases to speak to the hearts of all her sons and daughters: “*Do whatever he tells you*”.

Flores, Nusa Bunga, sebuah nama yang indah! Namun di balik nama ini terselit satu tugas yang berat untuk anda kalian, yaity menyebarkan kembang-kembang iman, menyebarkan keharuman Kristus sendiri di mana pun Anda berada dan kemana pun Anda pergi, agar semua orang dapat mengalami keselamatan Allah. Semoga Tuhan selalu menyertai Anda sekalian. Bunda Maria, doakanlah kami.

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