



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
AT THE LOURDES GROTTO IN THE VATICAN GARDENS
TO MARK THE END OF MARY'S MONTH**

31 May 1998

This year the Marian feast of the Visitation coincides with the great Solemnity of Pentecost, by which it is absorbed in a way and illuminated. The yearly gathering at this picturesque grotto in the Vatican Gardens, to mark the end of Mary's month, offers us the happy opportunity of pausing in prayer with her in an atmosphere of family recollection, extending as it were our joy and wonder at the superabundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Today more than ever, Mary appears to us as a figure and model of the Church who, sustained by the Spirit, brings Christ the Saviour to the world. The biblical readings for the feast of the Visitation present the Blessed Virgin, who, bearing in her womb the Son of God newly conceived by the power of the Most High, goes to help her elderly cousin Elizabeth. She is the Ark of the New Covenant, who bears within herself the fulfilment of the messianic promises. The meeting between the two women and their unborn children takes place in the joy inspired by the Holy Spirit and culminates in the Magnificat, the song of hope for those who believe in the fulfilment of the Lord's words.

This year, dedicated to the Holy Spirit, we are called "to a renewed appreciation of the theological virtue of hope" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 46). As today's Solemnity of Pentecost draws to a close, let us invoke Mary as our model and as the one who instils hope in the heart of the Church, as in the Upper Room of Jerusalem. To her intercession we entrust the evangelizing mission *ad gentes*, so that 2,000 years after her "yes", which opened the doors to Redemption, the Word who became flesh for our salvation may continue to be proclaimed and witnessed to in all the languages of the world and in every corner of the earth.

In particular, we implore the motherly protection of Our Lady for all who live and work in the Vatican, that they may be ever docile to the action of the Holy Spirit and carry out their service, wherever they may be, with humble willingness and

generous fidelity.

O Mary, glorious Temple of the Holy Spirit, pray for us!

For the victims of the Afghanistan Earthquake:

You too have heard the news about the serious earthquake which struck Afghanistan a few hours ago, causing thousands of deaths. I wish to express to the sorely tried people of that region my affection and the assurance of my spiritual closeness. I invite you to join me in praying that God will receive the earthquake victims into his peace, give comfort to the relatives and survivors, and inspire everyone to come to their aid. Lastly, the Holy Father addressed a few words in Spanish to the Regnum Christi Movement. I am especially happy to greet the large Spanish- and English-speaking group from the Regnum Christi Movement. May the Blessed Virgin grant you the grace to pursue with faith and determination your apostolic task in the service of the Church.

To Spanish and English speaking members of Regnum Christe:

I am especially happy to greet the large Spanish- and English-speaking group from the Regnum Christi Movement. May the Blessed Virgin grant you the grace to pursue with faith and determination your apostolic task in the service of the Church.

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