



The Holy See

MARIAN VIGIL FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE MONTH OF MAY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Vatican Gardens
Saturday, 30 May 2009*

*Venerable Brothers,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I greet you all with affection at the end of the traditional Marian Vigil that concludes the month of May in the Vatican. This year it has acquired a quite special value because it occurs on the eve of Pentecost. In gathering together in spiritual recollection around the Virgin Mary and contemplating the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, you have relived the experience of the first disciples, who gathered in the Upper Room together with "the Mother of Jesus" and "with one accord devoted... to prayer", awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14). Let us too, on this penultimate evening of May, pray for the outpouring of the Spirit Paraclete upon us, upon the Church in Rome and upon the entire Christian People.

The great Feast of Pentecost invites us to meditate on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary, a very close, privileged and indissoluble relationship. The Virgin of Nazareth was chosen in advance to become the Mother of the Redeemer through the power of the Holy Spirit: in her humility, she found favour in God's eyes (cf. Lk 1:30). In fact, in the New Testament we see that Mary's faith, so to speak, "attracts" the gift of the Holy Spirit. First of all in the conception of the Son of God, a mystery that the Archangel Gabriel himself explains in this way: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). Immediately afterwards Mary went to help Elizabeth, and when she arrived and greeted her, the Holy Spirit caused the child to leap in the womb of her elderly kinswoman (cf. Lk 1:44); and the whole dialogue between the two mothers is inspired by God's Spirit, especially the *Magnificat*, the hymn

of praise in which Mary expresses her innermost sentiments. The whole event of Jesus' birth and early childhood is guided almost tangibly by the Holy Spirit, although he is not always mentioned. Mary's heart, in perfect unison with the divine Son, is a temple of the Spirit of truth in which every word and every event are preserved in faith, hope and charity (cf. Lk 2:19, 51).

We may therefore be certain that the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the whole of his hidden life in Nazareth always found in his Mother's Immaculate Heart, a "hearth" ever alight with prayer and with constant attention to the voice of the Spirit. The events at the Wedding at Cana are an attestation of this unique harmony between the Mother and the Son in seeking God's will. In a situation laden with symbols of the Covenant, such as the wedding feast, the Virgin Mother intercedes and provokes, so to speak, a sign of superabundant grace: the "good wine" that refers to the mystery of Christ's Blood. This leads us directly to Calvary, where Mary stands beneath the Cross together with the other women and with the Apostle John. The Mother and the disciple receive spiritually the testament of Jesus: his last words and his last breath, in which he begins to pour out the Spirit; and they receive the silent cry of his Blood, poured out entirely for us (cf. Jn 19:25-34). Mary knew where that Blood came from: it had been formed within her by the power of the Holy Spirit and she knew that this same creative "power" was to raise Jesus, as he had promised.

Thus Mary's faith sustained that of the disciples until their encounter with the Risen Lord and continued to accompany them also after his Ascension into Heaven, as they waited for "[Baptism] in the Holy Spirit" (cf. Acts 1:5). At Pentecost the Virgin Mother appears anew as the Bride of the Spirit, for a universal motherhood of all those who are generated by God through faith in Christ. This is why, for all the generations, Mary is an image and model of the Church which together with the Spirit journeys through time, invoking Jesus' glorious return: "Come, Lord Jesus" (cf. Rv 22:17, 20).

Dear friends, let us too learn at the school of Mary to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to listen to his inspirations and to follow them with docility. He makes us grow in accordance with the fullness of Christ, in accordance with those good fruits which the Apostle Paul lists in his Letter to the Galatians: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22). I hope you will be filled with these gifts and that you will always walk with Mary, in accordance with the Spirit, and, while I express my gratitude and praise for your participation in this evening's celebration, I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing to all of you and to your loved ones.

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