



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF POPE BENEDICT XVI
TO PORTUGAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BEATIFICATION OF JACINTA AND FRANCISCO,
YOUNG SHEPHERDS OF FÁTIMA

RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Chapel of Apparitions, Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima
Wednesday, 12 May 2010

Dear pilgrims,

All of you, standing together with lighted candles in your hands, seem like a sea of light around this simple chapel, lovingly built to the honour of the Mother of God and our mother, whose path from earth to heaven appeared to the shepherd children like a way of light. However, neither Mary nor we have a light of our own: we receive it from Jesus. His presence within us renews the mystery and the call of the burning bush which once drew Moses on Mount Sinai and still fascinates those aware of the light within us which burns without consuming us (cf. Ex 3:2-5). We are merely a bush, but one upon which the glory of God has now come down. To him therefore be every glory, and to us the humble confession of our nothingness and the unworthy adoration of the divine plan which will be fulfilled when “God will be all in all” (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). The matchless servant of that plan was the Virgin full of grace: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Dear pilgrims, let us imitate Mary, letting her words “Let it be done to me” resound in our lives. God ordered Moses: “Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground” (Ex 3:5). And that is what he did: he would put his shoes back on to free his people from slavery in Egypt and to guide them to the promised land. This was not about the possession of a parcel of

land or about the national territory to which every people has a right; in the struggle for the freedom of Israel and in the exodus from Egypt, what appears central is above all the freedom to worship, the freedom of a religion of one's own. Throughout the history of the chosen people, the promise of a homeland comes more and more to mean this: the land is granted in order to be a place of obedience, a window open to God.

In our time, in which the faith in many places seems like a light in danger of being snuffed out for ever, the highest priority is to make God visible in the world and to open to humanity a way to God. And not to any god, but to the God who had spoken on Sinai; the God whose face we recognize in the love borne to the very end (cf. Jn 13:1) in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Dear brothers and sisters, worship Christ the Lord in your hearts (cf. 1 Pet 3:15)! Do not be afraid to talk of God and to manifest without fear the signs of faith, letting the light of Christ shine in the presence of the people of today, just as the Church which gives birth to humanity as the family of God sings on the night of the Easter Vigil.

Brothers and sisters, in this place it is amazing to think how three children entrusted themselves to the interior force which had enflamed them in the apparitions of the Angel and of our heavenly Mother. In this place where we were repeatedly requested to recite the rosary, let us allow ourselves to be attracted by the mysteries of Christ, the mysteries of Mary's rosary. The recitation of the rosary allows us to fix our gaze and our hearts upon Jesus, just like his Mother, the supreme model of contemplation of the Son. Meditating upon the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries as we pray our Hail Marys, let us reflect upon the interior mystery of Jesus, from the Incarnation, through the Cross, to the glory of the Resurrection; let us contemplate the intimate participation of Mary in the mystery of our life in Christ today, a life which is also made up of joy and sorrow, of darkness and light, of fear and hope. Grace invades our hearts, provoking a wish for an incisive and evangelical change of life so that we can say with Saint Paul: "For me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21) in a communion of life and destiny with Christ.

The devotion and affection of all of you, the faithful who have come here from all around the world, is clear to me. I bring with me the worries and hopes of our times, the sufferings of our wounded humanity and the problems of the world, and I place them at the feet of Our Lady of Fatima: Virgin Mother of God and our own dear Mother, intercede for us before your Son, that the family of nations, both those called Christians and those who do not yet know the Saviour, may live in peace and harmony, in order that they come together as the one people of God, to the glory of the most holy and indivisible Trinity. Amen.