



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 500th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Through this video message, I am pleased to join you in celebrating the five-hundredth anniversary of the first preaching of the Gospel in the Philippines.

I know that you have long prepared for this event and that you are celebrating it in a particular way these days, as you gather for the *Second National Missionary Encounter*.

I would like to share with you three mysteries of our faith, which are part of the deepest Christian roots of your people: *Nazareth, the Cross and Pentecost*.

Let us contemplate *Nazareth*. The tender love of the Holy Child, which is a symbol of the arrival of Christianity in your archipelago, reminds us of *the hidden life of the Holy Family in Nazareth*. Mary and Joseph raised the Child Jesus with love. By opening the doors of your families to the Holy Child, you too will be able to transmit to your children the faith that you received from your parents. Thank you for that deep sense of *family, community and fraternity* that keeps you firm in faith, joyful in hope and attentive in charity.

All of you, the pilgrim People of God in the Philippines, pastors and faithful, are likewise a people that know what it means to accompany Jesus, the Nazarene, on *the way of the Cross*.

The Cross. I think of all the difficulties you have had to face, especially in the years of immediate preparation for this jubilee: earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions and the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet despite all that pain and devastation, you continued to carry the cross and to keep walking.

You suffered greatly, but you also got up, time and time again. Keep working, rebuilding and helping one another like good Cyreneans. Thank you too for your witness of strength and trust in God, who never abandons you. Thank you for your patience, for how you always look ahead despite hardships and keep walking. Thank you.

Finally, *Pentecost*. Pentecost is a point of arrival, but also a new beginning. Someone was there on that journey, someone who was always at Jesus' side when he was a child in *Nazareth*, and then accompanied him at the most difficult moment of his life, standing at the foot of his Cross. That someone is Mary, his Mother. Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, was also with the apostles on the day of *Pentecost*, as they prayed and awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit. After receiving the Spirit, the apostles went out to proclaim the Gospel fearlessly to the ends of the earth. Mary is always there with all of you. She is the mother who never leaves our side. She has always accompanied you and now we ask her to intercede for a new Pentecost of the Church in the Philippines. So let us remember those three words that mark three milestones in your history: Nazareth, the Cross and Pentecost.

During this jubilee year, let the words of Jesus guide you: "Without cost you received; without cost you are to give" (*Mt* 10:8). These words are an invitation to thank God for all those who handed on the faith to you. I myself can testify that you know how to hand on the faith; it is something you do very well, whether in your own country or abroad. Be grateful for the gift of faith. Thank God for the people who gave you the faith and for all those to whom you will pass it on in turn. Renew your enthusiasm for evangelization. Reach out to others and bring them the hope and joy of the Gospel.

Dear friends: I recall my visit to your country with great fondness. I cannot forget our final meeting, with almost seven million people present. You are generous and you know how to celebrate the feast of faith. Never lose those qualities, even in the midst of difficulties. In those massive gatherings, those who spoke about receiving the gift of faith said they wanted to continue sharing it and proclaiming it to everyone.

Do not be afraid; you are not alone in this mission. Two great saints of your land accompany you: Saint Pedro Calungsod and Saint Lorenzo Ruiz. Two holy catechists who knew how to give without cost what they had received without cost: life and faith in Jesus.

Keep moving forward; the Pope is always at your side. May Jesus bless you and bless all the Filipino people. May the Holy Virgin watch over you and the Santo Niño be always with you. I ask you, please, to remember to pray for me. Thank you very much.