



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE MONTH OF MARY***

*Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens
Monday, 31 May 1999*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With this inspiring celebration in the Vatican Gardens, we end the month of May, which this year was especially dedicated to praying for peace. In this regard, today's feast of the Visitation offers us a very significant point for meditation: it presents the Blessed Virgin who, bearing within her the Word made flesh, goes to help her elderly cousin who is about to give birth. In Mary we recognize the model of the Church which, through her works of mercy and charity, brings Christ the Saviour's peace to the world.

How many of the Church's children over the last 2,000 years have borne witness to the love of the heavenly Father on the many frontiers of solidarity! This in a way is a great "visitation", which is extended to the whole world, radiant with the mystery of God who makes himself close to man and cares for his physical and moral wounds.

By so doing, the Church becomes each day a peacemaker with the humble courage of Blessed Mary, the handmaid of the God of peace.

Let us look to her, dear brothers and sisters, as we pray before this grotto, which reminds us of Lourdes and the other places where a special "visitation" of Our Lady occurred in history. In Mary's Visitation we see the fatherly concern of God, who never abandons his people; indeed, he cares for the least ones and those excluded. In his great mercy, God has visited and redeemed his people! This is the reason for every Jubilee, and especially for the forthcoming 2,000th anniversary of the Incarnation. This evening let us entrust our every project and prayer to Mary, Virgin of the Visitation and Queen of Peace. Amen.

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