



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONGRESS OF THE
PONTIFICAL INTERNATIONAL MARIAN ACADEMY**

*Audience Hall
Saturday, 6 September 2025*

[Multimedia]

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Peace be with you!

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Religious, Civil and Military Authorities,
Dear Ambassadors and Scholars of Mariology,
Dear brothers and sisters!

I am pleased to receive you at the conclusion of the Congress of the International Marian Academy. I greet the President, the Secretary, the members of the Executive Council, the collaborators and all the benefactors.

The Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, teaches us to be the holy People of God; hence the importance of this Pontifical Academy, a forum for thought, spirituality and dialogue, tasked with coordinating the studies and scholars of Mariology, in the service of a genuine and fruitful *pietas mariana*.

At this 26th Congress, you pondered whether the Church's Marian dimension is a remnant of the past or a prophecy for the future, capable of freeing minds and hearts from the customs and nostalgia of a "Christian society" that no longer exists. You have discussed the goals and values

that Marian devotion offers to believers, considering whether they support the hope and consolation that the Church is called to proclaim. You have recognized in the *jubilee* and in *synodality* two biblical and theological themes that effectively express the vocation and mission of the Mother of the Lord.

As a “jubilant” woman, Mary is always ready to respond by first listening to the Word, according to the disposition described by Saint Augustine: “All consult you about what they want, but they do not always hear the answer they want. Your most faithful servant is the one who does not seek to hear from you what he wants, but rather to want what he hears from you” (*Confessions*, X, 26). As a “synodal” woman, she is fully and maternally engaged in the action of the Holy Spirit, who summons those who previously believed they had reasons to remain divided due to mutual distrust and even enmity as brothers and sisters (cf. *Mt* 5:43-48).

A Church with a Marian heart always better preserves and understands the hierarchy of truths of faith, integrating mind and heart, body and soul, universal and local, person and community, humanity and cosmos. It is a Church that does not shy away from asking herself, others and God uncomfortable questions — “how shall this be?” (*Lk* 1:34) — and to walk the demanding paths of faith and love — “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1:38).

A Marian *pietas* and practice oriented towards the service of hope and consolation frees us from fatalism, superficiality and fundamentalism; it takes all human realities seriously, starting with the least and the discarded; it contributes to giving voice and dignity to those who are sacrificed on the altars of ancient and new idols.

Since the vocation of the Mother of the Lord is understood as the vocation of the Church, Marian theology has the task of cultivating in all the People of God, first of all, a willingness to “start afresh” with God, his Word and the needs of our neighbor, with humility and courage (cf. *Lk* 1:38-39). It must also cultivate the desire to walk towards the unity that flows from the Trinity, in order to bear witness to the world, to the beauty of faith, the fruitfulness of love and the prophecy of hope that does not disappoint. Contemplating the mystery of God and history of Mary’s inner gaze protects us from the distortions of propaganda, ideology and unhealthy information, which can never speak a disarmed and disarming word, and opens us to divine gratuitousness, which alone makes it possible for people, populations and cultures to walk together in peace (cf. *Lk* 24:36, 46-48).

This is why the Church needs Mariology. It should be considered and promoted in academic centers, shrines and parish communities, associations and movements, institutes of consecrated life, as well as in places where contemporary cultures are forged, valuing the limitless inspiration offered by art, music and literature.

In recent years, the Marian Academy has also launched various initiatives to advance the image and message of the Mother of Jesus as a way of encounter and dialogue between cultures. Indeed, as the perfect cooperator with the Holy Spirit, she never ceases to open doors, build bridges, break down walls and help humanity to live in peace and in the harmony of diversity.

I thank you for this ecclesial service, which continues to remind us that the Church always has a Marian “face” and a Marian praxis. I also congratulate those who have submitted their musical and artistic works for the annual international award “Mary, Way of Peace between Cultures.”

Dear friends, may your Academy always be a home and a school open to all those who wish to place their Marian studies at the service of the Church. For this I pray and offer you my blessing. Thank you.