



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 2 May 1979

1. *Regina caeli laetare, alleluia / quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia / ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

I wish to dedicate today's General Audience particularly to the Mother of the Risen Christ. The Easter period permits us to address her with the words of pure joy with which the Church greets her. *The month of May*, which began yesterday, encourages us to think and speak particularly of her. This, in fact, is her month. In this way, therefore, the period of the liturgical year and the current month together call and invite our hearts to open in a special way to Mary.

2. The Church with her *Easter antiphon* "Regina Caeli" speaks to the Mother, to her who had the fortune to bear in her womb, under her heart, and later in her arms, the Son of God and our Saviour. She took him in her arms for the last time when he was taken down from the Cross, on Calvary. Before her eyes, he was wrapped in the shroud and taken to the tomb. Before his Mother's eyes! And lo, on the third day the tomb was found empty. But she was not the first to discover it. First there were the "three Marys" and among them particularly Mary Magdalen, the converted sinner. The apostles, informed by the women, ascertained it shortly afterwards. And even though the Gospels do not tell us anything about the visit of Christ's Mother to the place of his Resurrection, we all think, however, that *she must somehow have been the first one present*. She must have been the first to *participate in the mystery of the Resurrection*, because such was her right as Mother.

The liturgy of the Church respects this right of the Mother, when it addresses to her this particular invitation to the joy of the Resurrection: *Laetare! Resurrexit sicut dixit!* And the same antiphon at once adds the request for intercession: *Ora pro nobis Deum*. The revelation of the divine power of

the Son by means of the Resurrection is at the same time the revelation of the "omnipotence of intercession" (*omnipotentia supplex*) of Mary with regard to this Son.

3. The Church of all times, beginning from the Upper Room at Pentecost, always surrounds Mary with particular veneration and addresses her with special trust.

The Church of our times, by means of the Second Vatican Council, has made a synthesis of all that had grown during the generations. The eighth chapter of the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* is in a certain sense a "Magna Charta" of *Mariology* for our times: Mary present in a special way in the mystery of Christ and in the mystery of the Church; Mary, "Mother of the Church", as Paul VI began to call her (in the Creed of the People of God), subsequently dedicating to her a separate document "*Marialis Cultus*").

This presence of Mary in the mystery of the Church, that is at the same time in the daily life of the People of God all over the world, is *above all a motherly presence*. Mary, so to speak, gives the salvific work of the Son and the mission of the Church a singular form: the motherly form. Everything that can be stated in the human language on the subject of the "genius" peculiar to the woman-mother—the genius of the heart—all this refers to her.

Mary is always the most complete *fulfilment* of the salvific mystery—from the Immaculate Conception to the Assumption—and she is continually a more efficacious *announcement* of this mystery. She reveals salvation, brings grace closer also to those who seem the most indifferent and the most distant. In the world, which together with progress manifests its "corruption" and its "aging", she is unceasingly "*the beginning of the better world*" (*origo mundi melioris*), as Paul VI put it. "To modern man,"—the late Pontiff wrote among other things—"the blessed Virgin Mary... offers a serene vision and a reassuring word: the victory of hope over anguish, of communion over solitude, of peace over agitation, of joy and beauty over boredom and nausea.., of life over death" (Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 57).

4. I wish in particular to bring the youth of the whole world and of the whole Church closer to her, to Mary who is the Mother of fair Love. She bears within her an indestructible sign of youth and beauty which never pass. I wish and pray that the young will approach her, have confidence in her, and entrust to her the life that is before them; that they will love her with a simple and warm love of the heart. She alone is capable of responding to this love in the best way:

"Ipsam sequens non devias,
ipsam rogans non desperas,
ipsam cogitans non erras...
ipsam propitia—pervenis..."

(St Bernard, *Homilia II super Missus est*. XVII: PL 183, 71).

To Mary who is the Mother of divine grace I entrust *priestly* and religious vocations. May the new spring of vocations, their new increase throughout the Church, become a particular proof of her motherly presence in the mystery of Christ, in our times, and in the mystery of his Church all over the earth. *Mary alone is a living incarnation* of that total and complete dedication to God, to Christ, to his salvific action, which must find its adequate expression in every priestly and religious vocation. Mary is the fullest expression of perfect faithfulness to the Holy Spirit and to his action in the soul; she is the expression of the faithfulness which means persevering cooperation in the grace of vocation.

Next Sunday is appointed in the whole Church to prayer for vocations to the priesthood and for vocations of men and women to the religious life. *It is Vocation Sunday*. Through the intercession of the Mother of divine grace, may it bring an abundant harvest.

5. To the Mother of Christ and of the Church I dedicate *the whole world, all the nations* on earth, *all men*, because she is the Mother of them all. In particular I dedicate to her those for whom life is more difficult, more severe, those who are suffering physically or spiritually, who are living in poverty, who are subjected to injustice or harm.

In a special way, however, concluding this May meditation, I wish to venerate, tomorrow, Mary *in Jasna Gora* (Bright Mountain) at *Czestochowa* and in the whole of my country. I used to go there on pilgrimage every year on 3 May, which is the feast of the Queen of Poland. Every year I celebrated a solemn mass there, during which Cardinal Wyszynski, the Primate of Poland, in the presence of the Episcopate and of the immense crowd of pilgrims, renewed the act of consecration of Poland to the "motherly bondage" of our Lady. This year, too, God willing, I will visit Jasna Gora on 4 and 5 June. Tomorrow, on the other hand, I will be there *in spirit and in heart*, to repeat together with the whole Church, together with all of you gathered here in this splendid St Peter's Square: "Regina caeli laetare, alleluia"!

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