



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO CANADA

(SEPTEMBER 9-20, 1984) EUCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION AT TORONTO HOMILY OF POPE JOHN PAUL

//Downsview Airport (Toronto)

Saturday, 15 September 1984 "Wisdom speaks her own praises, in the midst of her people she glories in herself. / I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, / and I covered the earth like mist" (Sir. 24, 1. 3) Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, 1. Today's feast finds us united in this City of Toronto, together with Cardinal Carter, Bishop Borecky and the other Bishops, to proclaim God's eternal Wisdom. The liturgical readings of the Mass lead us in our praise of this eternal Wisdom. The commemoration of Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows is linked with yesterday's feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross. The mystery of the Cross on Golgotha and the mystery of the Cross in the heart of the Mother of the Crucified One cannot be read in any other way: only in the perspective of eternal Wisdom is this mystery clarified for our faith. Indeed it becomes the beam of a special light in human history, in the midst of people's destiny on earth. This light is, first of all, in the Heart of Christ lifted up on the Cross. This light, reflected by the power of a special love, shines forth in the Heart of the Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross. For wisdom also means Love. In Love is the ripest fruit of Wisdom and, at the same time, its fullest source. In Christ crucified, man has become a sharer of eternal Wisdom, approaching it through the Heart of the Mother who stood beneath the Cross: "Near the Cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sisters, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala" (Jo. 19, 25). 2. Today - perhaps more than in yesterday's feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross - the liturgy emphasizes the "human" aspect. This is nothing unusual. For in it there is reflected the human Heart of Mary, and beside the Mother is the human Heart of the Son who is God and Man. In the Letter to the Hebrews we read the following words about Christ: "During his life on earth he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death" (Hebr. 5, 7). Does this not perhaps evoke for us the prayer in Gethsemane when Jesus prayed that the chalice be removed from him, if possible! (Matth. 26, 39) Dear brothers and sisters: the Christ whom we encounter in our liturgy, alongside his own Mother of Sorrows, the Christ who offers his "prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears", does so as head of humanity - a humanity immersed to a great extent in the promises and problems of technology and tempted to embrace a technological mentality. Christ continues to send forth to his Father his cry for the salvation of the world, for the building of a new earth, one that is more human because it is embraced by the love of a Mother - his Mother and ours. In this same Letter to the Hebrews we read: "Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering" (Hebr. 5, 8). Elsewhere Saint Paul will say: he became "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2, 8) but here we read: "he learned to obey". And together with him, with the Son, his Mother learned obedience - she, who had previously said "Fiat": "I am the handmaid of the Lord . . . let what you have said be done to me" (Luc. 1, 38). 3. This cry of the Son's Heart and of his Mother's Heart - a cry which from the human standpoint would reject the Cross - is expressed even further in the Psalm of today's liturgy. This Psalm is a cry for salvation, for help, for deliverance from the snare of evil: "In you, O Lord, I take refuge. / Let me

never be put to shame. / In your justice, set me free, / . . . speedily rescue me. Be a rock of refuge for me, a mighty stronghold to save me, for you are my rock, my stronghold. / Release me from the snares they have hidden . . . / Deliver me from the hands of those who hate me" (*Ps.* 31 (30), 1-3. 5. 16). Since these words of the Psalm reflect the whole "human" truth of the Hearts of the Son and of the Mother, they also express an act of absolute entrusting to God - dedication to God. This dedication is even stronger than the cry for deliverance. "Into your hands I commend my spirit. / It is you who will redeem me, Lord. / But as for my trust in you, Lord, / I say: 'You are my God'" (*Ibid.* 5. 14). This awareness - "You are my God. Into your hands I commend my spirit" - prevails absolutely in the Heart of the Son "lifted up" on the Cross, and in the Mother's Heart humanly emptied by the Son's crucifixion.⁴ We read in the Letter to the Hebrews: "He submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard . . . but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation" (*Hebr.* 5, 7. 9). In this consists the mystery of the "Triumph of the Cross", on which, together with the whole Church, we meditated yesterday. Eternal Wisdom has embraced all that the Cross of Christ contains. "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High and I covered the earth like mist" (*Sir.* 24, 3). So it is: the whole earth has been covered by the mystery of eternal Wisdom, whose real name is Love. "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son" (*Jo.* 3, 16). And behold - at the very centre of this "giving himself" through love, from the height of the Cross on which the Son is completely united to the Father, and the Father to the Son - the words resound which confirm his Mother's presence and her special sharing in the mystery of eternal Wisdom. Jesus says: "Woman, behold your son!" Beside Mary at the foot of the Cross stood John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (*Ibid.* 19, 26). And he says to John: "This is your mother!". These words were written by John himself, as an Evangelist. And he added: "And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home" (*Ibid.* 19, 27)⁵. Eternal Wisdom came into the world and was spoken in the Son who became Man and was born of the Virgin Mary. Eternal Wisdom embraced then from the very beginning also Mary when it assigned the Son's dwelling place on the earth: "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance" (*Sir.* 24, 13). For she is the daughter of Israel; she is from the line of Jacob. She is the Mother of the Messiah! How marvellously are the words of the Book of Sirach fulfilled in her - an unknown and hidden Virgin of Nazareth: "From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain" (*Sir.* 24, 19). You, beloved Daughter of God our Father - you were truly foreseen from eternity in Divine Wisdom, since from eternity by this Wisdom the Son was given to us. You, beloved Mother of God's Son! You, Virgin Spouse of the Holy Spirit! You, who dwell in the tabernacle of the Most Holy Trinity! Truly, you will never cease to be in the very heart of the Divine Plan. And that which Wisdom proclaims further on in Sirach is also true: "I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was I established on Zion . . . and in Jerusalem I wield my authority" (*Ibid.* 24, 10-11)⁶. Eternal Wisdom caused all this. And in time eternal Wisdom concealed it - to the point of the emptying that took place on the Cross of Christ. But right there - at the Cross of Christ eternal Wisdom revealed both your service and your power! And it did so with the words: "This is your mother!" The only one who hears these words is John, and yet in him all people hear them - everyone and each one. Mother, this is your service, your holy service! Mother, this is your power! By means of this holy service, the most holy service, through this motherly power you "took root in an honoured people, in the portion of the Lord, who is their inheritance" (*Ibid.* 24, 13). All of us desire to have you as a Mother, for as such you were left to us by Christ lifted up on the Cross. And this act of his was the fruit of eternal Wisdom. All of us desire your motherly service which conquers hearts, and we long for this power which is the motherly service born from the whole mystery of Christ. The title Sorrowful Mother means precisely this. *Alma Socia Christi* means precisely this, for you have been associated with Christ in his whole mystery, which eternal Wisdom reveals and in which we desire to share ever more deeply: "They who eat me will hunger for more. They who drink me will thirst for more" (*Sir.* 24, 21)⁷. Dear brothers and sisters: through the liturgy today, Christ's prayer and entreaty and the love of his Mother are offered for all those who experience the pains and challenges of this world of technology: - For

all of you who in your ethnic diversity compose the fabric of this great city, striving to remain faithful to your origins, while working together to express your new moral unity in Canada.- For all of you who live in Toronto, this heartland of Canada's industrial and technological development.- For all who in one way or another make up the technological society: for workers in industry; all those engaged in activities of finance, commerce, education, publishing, infomatics, medical research, the arts; for the leaders in communities; for the direct and indirect employers of millions of people.- For the unemployed and all of you who are caught in the coils of an economic crisis and suffer its social effects. - For the poor, those who experience alienation and all those who hunger and thirst for solidarity.⁸ Christ's prayer is for all of you live in hope, beside a cross that rises to the sky and illumines daily existence with the light of eternal Wisdom. And side by side with you, beneath this cross, there is that loving Mother who has experienced sorrow and understands pain, and who, in her maternity and femininity, offers to all humanity the reassurance of loving care and personal concern for each individual, each human person.⁹ Et aujourd'hui je vous demande à tous de considérer la technologie dans le contexte du message de la Croix et de faire ce qui dépend de vous pour que le pouvoir de la technologie serve la cause de la paix. La technologie a tant apporté au bien-être de l'humanité, elle a tant contribué à élever la condition de l'homme, à servir l'humanité et à faciliter et parfaire son œuvre! Et pourtant, parfois, la technologie ne peut déterminer en toute clarté qui elle sert: si elle est pour l'humanité ou contre elle. La même technologie qui a le pouvoir d'aider les pauvres va parfois jusqu'à appauvrir, à limiter les possibilités d'emploi, à réduire le champ de la créativité de l'homme. Dans ces cas et en bien d'autres, la technologie cesse d'être l'alliée de la personne humaine. C'est pourquoi mon appel s'adresse à tous ceux qui sont concernés: à vous, responsables syndicaux; à vous, responsables d'entreprises; à vous, scientifiques; à vous, responsables politiques; à tous ceux qui peuvent contribuer à faire en sorte que la technologie, qui a tant apporté à la construction de Toronto et de tout le Canada, serve véritablement tout homme, toute femme et tout enfant dans l'ensemble de ce pays. Et alors que la technologie connaît les plus grands des succès, puisse-t-elle nous amener à proclamer l'insurpassable grandeur de la Sagesse divine qui rend la technologie possible, mais qui en révèle les limites par la Croix du Christ. Et par la Croix du Christ, la Sagesse divine montre ce monde nouveau que toute technologie doit servir: celui qui est aimé de l'amour d'une Mère. Aujourd'hui nous adressons notre prière à cette Mère: Be a guide to Christ for us, O Mary. Be for us a Morning Star that shines in the heavens of eternal Wisdom, above the horizons of our human world. Amen. In questa occasione desidero salutare tutti quelli tra voi che sono venuti dall'Italia. Desidero anche ringraziarvi per la calorosa accoglienza di ieri e di oggi. La vita di ogni emigrante ha le sue difficoltà ma ha anche l'opportunità del tutto peculiare che è quella di poter attingere alle fonti di due culture e guadagnare così quella saggezza che non viene necessariamente dai libri ma dal vivere e lavorare in due ambienti diversi. Carissimi italiani, voi avete portato tanto dalla vostra patria venendo dalle diverse regioni dell'Italia. Voi avete anche tanto ricevuto dal Canada e al Canada potete dare tutto quello che avete ricevuto dalla vostra amata Italia. Dio è lo stesso in tutte e due le nazioni, la sua Chiesa è la stessa, e il Papa viene da Roma! Rimanete fedeli a Dio e insegnate ai vostri figli a essere fedeli non soltanto con le parole ma soprattutto con la vostra vita e il vostro esempio. Possa Dio e Maria, nostra Madre celeste, benedire voi e le vostre famiglie come anche i vostri cari in Italia. Apresento as minhas saudações a todos vós, emigrantes portugueses. Agradeço as vossas calorosas saudações, ontem e hoje. Consequistes estabelecer-vos neste país, com o vosso árduo e disciplinado trabalho. A vida do imigrante nem sempre é fácil, mas o vosso esforço foi abençoado por Deus. Os países são diferentes uns dos outros, mas Deus é o mesmo em toda a parte. Uma das características da Igreja é ser católica. Eu exorto-vos a que permaneçais fiéis a Deus, na sua Igreja edificada sobre Pedro, e que ensineis aos vossos filhos a mesma fidelidade. Eu peço a Deus e a Nossa Senhora de Fátima, por vós e por todas as vossas famílias. Em nome do mesmo Deus, a vós abençoo. Deseo saludar a aquellos de ustedes en la lengua madre que es el español. Ustedes han venido de muchos países y a veces la adaptación al nuevo pueblo puede

ser difícil, pero tantas dificultades demandan tantas habilidades que podrían haber quedado latentes si ustedes hubieran permanecido en casa. Los países pueden ser diferentes, pero Dios es el mismo; El les llama a ustedes a ser fieles a El y a su Iglesia. Estén seguros de que sus hijos reciban la educación católica y enséñenles a ser seguidores de Jesús con su propio ejemplo. Quiera Dios bendecirles a ustedes y a sus familiares; también a sus seres queridos en España y en otros países de lengua española. Ich grüße alle jene, deren Muttersprache so war oder noch ist. Die meisten von euch sind schon viele Jahre hier in Kanada und haben die Schwierigkeiten des Einwanderens schon fast vergessen. Eure Aufgabe ist jetzt, die Treue zu all dem zu bewahren, was euch gegeben wurde. Ihr habt viel empfangen, und so habt ihr auch viel zu geben. Ihr könnt Kanada viel geben und könnt euren Kindern viel geben. Gott und seine Kirche haben euch in der Vergangenheit begleitet. Wo immer ihr gewesen seid, ich ermahne euch, Gott treu zu bleiben und diese Treue an den Glauben an eure Kinder weiterzugeben. Möge Gott euch und eure Familien segnen. Finally, I wish to salute all the other ethnic communities residing in this part of Canada which have established their Catholic parishes and missions besides the ones I have already addressed. I wish to greet the following communities: the native people of Canada, the Lebanese, Armenians, the Caribbeans, the Chinese, the Czechs, Hungarians, Koreans, Indonesians, Lithuanians, Laotians, people from Goa, Kerala and other parts of India, the Maltese, Filipinos, Slovaks, Slovenians, Vietnamese, the many Ukrainians, and Poles. I met them yesterday. To each and every one of you I wish to express my sincere thanks for the warm and affectionate greetings extended to me yesterday and today. Your being with the Successor of Peter is a visible and audible sign of the Church's true unity and the universality of her mission. Your visible presence is also a sign of your firm desire to remain faithful to your roots and traditions of your native lands, your homelands. It is a sign as well of your desire to grow from Canada's richness, sense of fairness and from its traditions and institutions and building and safeguarding freedom and human dignity. I exhort you to remain faithful to God and to his Church. Do all in your power to communicate this fidelity to your children. And I pray to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, that she guide you continually to her Son. © Copyright 1984 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana