



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II FOR CLOSE OF MARIAN MONTH

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Next Saturday, 31 May, I will be in Wroclaw, Poland, to conclude the International Eucharistic Congress on the theme “*Eucharist and Freedom*”. This is why I cannot join you at the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens for the traditional, evocative celebration at the Virgin’s feet at the end of the month of Mary. Nevertheless, I do not want this intense moment of prayer to lack a sign of my spiritual participation. Thus I entrust my cordial greetings for you all to Cardinal Virgilio Noè, my Vicar General for Vatican City.

The Church commemorates Mary’s Visitation to St Elizabeth on the last day of May. Our gaze pauses on the Blessed Virgin, wondrous Ark of the Covenant, who brought into the world Jesus Christ, the new and eternal Covenant between God and humanity. She is presented to the eyes of believers as a wonderful *monstrance of the Body of Christ*, conceived in her by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our thoughts turn to the moment of the Incarnation when the Word, on coming into the world, offers the Father his own humanity taken from Mary: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me.... Then I said: ‘Lo, I have come to do your will, O God’” (Heb 10:5, 7). Christ’s oblation in the Incarnation was to be crowned in the paschal mystery, of which the Eucharist is the everlasting memorial.

Mary conforms to her Son’s act of self-giving with full accord of mind and heart, from the “yes” of Nazareth to that of Golgotha. The Blessed Virgin lived in constant communion with Christ: her whole life can be said to be a sort of “*Eucharistic*” communion, communion with that “Bread come down from heaven”, given by the Father for the life of the world.

In her communion with Christ, Mary fully realizes her own *freedom* as a creature in no way subject to the slavery of sin (cf. Jn 8:34). She thus becomes an icon of hope and a prophecy of freedom for every human being and for all humanity. Mary sings of this in the *Magnificat*, precisely during

her meeting with Elizabeth: “For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation” (Lk 1:49-50).

Dear brothers and sisters, as you venerate the Blessed Virgin at the end of this month of May, you will be guided by her to unite yourselves spiritually with us gathered in Wroclaw to adore *Christ the Eucharist, the Saviour of the world, the Freedom of man*.

I thank you for the prayerful remembrance with which you accompany me, especially during my Apostolic Visits. I entrust you to the Blessed Virgin’s motherly protection and cordially impart to each of you my Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to all who are dear to you.

From the Vatican, 28 May 1997.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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