



The Holy See

LITURGY OF THE WORD
FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THE MONTH OF MARY

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
READ BY H.E. MSGR. FRANCESCO MARCHISANO

Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens
Saturday, 31 May 2003

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. As every year, you have recited the Holy Rosary, contemplating in particular the mystery of Mary's Visitation to St Elizabeth which the Liturgy celebrates for us today. In this way you have wished to conclude the month of May at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens. I join you in spirit and greet you with affection. I greet Archbishop Francesco Marchisano, my Vicar General for Vatican City, the Cardinals and the other Prelates present, the priests, the men and women Religious, the young people and all the faithful. I pray with each one of you in front of the Grotto as it were to offer to the Immaculate Virgin the gift of the whole spiritual journey completed in this Marian month: every resolution, every concern, every need of the Church and of the world. May the Blessed Virgin hear your every prayer.

2. On this occasion I would like to renew to everyone the invitation to recite the Rosary diligently, paying great attention to the tone. I am thinking of priests first of all: that their example and their guidance lead the faithful to rediscover the meaning and value of this prayer. I am thinking of consecrated persons, especially women Religious, of whom I imagine there are many among you: may they closely follow Mary who cherished the mysteries of her divine Son in her heart. I am thinking of families, and I urge them to gather often, especially in the evening, to recite the Rosary together: it is one of the most beautiful and comforting experiences of the domestic community!

3. The Year of the Rosary which we are celebrating constantly motivates us to reflect on Our

Lady's role in the history of salvation and in our lives. As she was associated with the mission of her divine Son, so Mary continues to accompany the Church on her way down the centuries. Let us persevere in prayer with her, dear friends, like the Apostles in the Upper Room while they waited for Pentecost, now at hand. The liturgy of these days helps us relive the spiritual atmosphere that led up to that event, and, if the whole Year of the Rosary is to be marked by constant prayer with Mary, we must be even more closely united to her in these days of the Novena, invoking an abundant outpouring of the Spirit upon the whole Church throughout the world.

Then as the month of May draws to a close and the month of June, consecrated to the Heart of Christ, begins, we are even more conscious of how Mary leads us to Christ. She is the shortest path to the Heart of Jesus, from which we can draw the extraordinary gifts of his love and his mercy.

"Magnificat anima mea Dominum!" (My soul magnifies the Lord). Let us make our own the canticle that welled up in Mary's heart at the home of St Elizabeth, and may our entire life be a song of praise to the Lord!

This, dear friends, is my hope; I cordially accompany it with my Blessing, which I gladly extend to all your loved ones.