



The Holy See

PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO LOURDES ON THE OCCASION OF 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PROMULGATION OF THE DOGMA
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

ANGELUS

Prairie de la Ribère
Sunday 15 August 2004

1. At the conclusion of this solemn Liturgy, I wish to offer a special greeting to those taking part in the French National Pilgrimage led by the "Famille de l'Assomption".

I greet in particular all the young people, who are so much at home in Lourdes and have placed themselves so generously at the service of their sick brothers and sisters as *hospitaliers*. I recall with fondness my meetings with young people in France: our first meeting in *Paris*, then those in *Lyons*, *Strasbourg* and once again in Paris for World Youth Day. Dear young friends: these meetings have given me *a great hope* which I wish to share with you today. Let Mary be your teacher, and *you will bring a fresh breath of optimism to the world*, as you proclaim to all the "good news" of Christ's Kingdom.

2. From the rock of Massabielle, the Blessed Virgin appeared to Bernadette. Revealing herself as the one who is full of God's grace, she called for penance and prayer. She indicated to Bernadette *a spring of water* and asked her to drink of it. That spring of fresh water has become *one of the symbols of Lourdes*: a symbol of the new life which Christ gives to all who turn to him.

Christianity is truly a fountain of life, and Mary is the first guardian of this fountain. She points it out to all people, inviting them to renounce their pride and to learn humility, so that they can draw from the mercy of her Son and thus work together for the dawn of the civilization of love.

3. As we meditate on the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus, let us now turn to Mary Most Holy, imploring her protection upon each of us, upon the Church and upon the world.

After the Angelus:

I cordially greet the pilgrims from Italy. May the Virgin Mary accompany you with her motherly smile and lead you to her Son Jesus. I cordially bless you all.

I wish the Spanish-speaking pilgrims the fulfilment of their intentions through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whom we venerate together in this place, and the Lord's constant assistance. With my Blessing.

My dear English-speaking brothers and sisters, may the Assumption into Heaven of our Blessed Lady remind us of the eternal Home to which we are all destined. God bless you all!

I offer the pilgrims from Belgium and Holland my greeting and Blessing, and I hope that they will be able to learn constantly at the school of Mary to accept God's presence in their lives.

I invite you German-speaking pilgrims to grow in availability to the work of God's grace, after the example of the Virgin Mary. With my Blessing to each.

An affectionate greeting to my fellow countrymen! While we recall the celebrations that are taking place today at the Shrine of Czestochowa, let us renew together, dear brothers and sisters, our entrustment and devotion to the Mother of Christ, Queen of Poland. I bless you with affection.

Lastly, to you, dear brothers and sisters of France: thank you for your welcome! Thank you for the beautiful celebrations at which we have participated together during this two-day pilgrimage!

I thank all those who worked so hard to make my presence among you possible! I entrust you all to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of St Bernadette. May their prayers obtain that you remain strong in faith, joyful in hope and generous in charity.

The Pope's prayer goes with you. I bless you all with deep affection.