



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 22 August 2004

1. Today is the feast of the *Queenship of Mary*, a feast closely connected with the mystery of the Assumption which last Sunday, 15 August, I had the joy of celebrating at the Shrine of Lourdes. As I repeat my gratitude to God and to all who helped me make that Pilgrimage, I think back in mind and heart to that humble Grotto of Massabielle. And from that place of silence and prayer where everything speaks of Mary, I go *to other Marian Shrines*, visited this month of August by throngs of the faithful.

2. Indeed, the feasts proper to so many Marian Shrines fit within the span of this month. I will limit myself to recalling the Shrines in Italy of: Loreto and Pompei, Our Lady of Oropa in Biella, Our Lady della Guardia in Genoa and Our Lady of Tears in Syracuse. Then, I cannot forget the Polish Shrines of Czestochowa and Kalvaria, where I have stopped many times to call on Our Lady's motherly help for the Church and for the world. May the heavenly Mother of the Redeemer be increasingly welcomed, loved and venerated by the Christian people!

3. In this context, I invite you to address with me the Virgin Mary, venerated with the title of *Mother of God of Kazan*. Her Icon, which left Russia in the 1920s, ended up in the Pope's Apartment and has watched over his daily work from that moment. Today I am pleased to announce that a special Delegation will return this Icon, so dear to me, to His Holiness Alexei II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Next Wednesday, 25 August, at the General Audience, together with the faithful, we will gather round this Icon to pray. From this moment, let us entrust to Mary, Mother of unity and love, all our

entreaties for the good of the Church and of the entire human family.

After leading the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

I now address my greeting to all the participants in the *25th Meeting for Friendship among Peoples*, which is taking place at Rimini in these days. In particular, I extend a cordial thought to Mons. Luigi Giussani, founder and leader of the Communion and Liberation Movement, which promotes the Meeting.

This year's theme: *"Our progress does not consist in presuming we have arrived, but in constantly striving for our goal"*, is a pleasing synthesis between the Christian spirit and a typical value of modern culture, precisely: "progress". Christianity, despite human limitations and errors, constitutes the most important factor of true progress because *Christ is the inexhaustible principle for the renewal of humankind and of the world*. May all believers, therefore, and all who genuinely seek the truth, find in Christ a cause for commitment and hope. This is my wish, which I accompany with a special Blessing.

A good Sunday to you all!

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