



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO BRAZIL

PRAYER OF JOHN PAUL II IN THE BASILICA OF APARECIDA

Aparecida (Brazil), 4 July 1980

Our Lady Aparecida!

1. At this solemn and exceptional moment, I wish to open before you, O Mother, the heart of this people, in whose midst you have wished to dwell in such a special way—as in the midst of other nations and peoples—as in the midst of that nation whose son I am. I wish to open before you the heart of the Church and the heart of the world to which this Church was sent by your Son. I wish to open to you my heart also.

Our Lady Aparecida! The woman revealed by God to crush the serpent's head (cf. Gen. 5:15) in your Immaculate Conception! Chosen from all eternity to be the mother of the Eternal Word, who, at the annunciation of the angel, was conceived in your virginal womb as the Son of Man and a real man!

United more closely to the mystery of the redemption of man and of the world at the foot of the cross on Calvary!

Given on Calvary as mother to all men in the person of John, the Apostle and Evangelist!

Given as mother to the whole Church, from the community that was preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit to the community of all those who are pilgrims on earth, in the course of the history of peoples and nations, of countries and continents, of eras and generations!...

Mary! I greet you and I say to you *Ave!* in this sanctuary where the Church of Brazil loves you,

venerates you and invokes you as Aparecida, as revealed and given to her in a particular way. As her mother and patroness! As mediatrix and advocate with the Son whose mother you are! As the model of all souls that possess true wisdom and, at the same time, the simplicity of the child, and that deep trust that overcomes all weakness and all suffering!

I wish to entrust to you particularly this People and this Church, this whole great and hospitable Brazil, all your sons and daughters, with all their problems and their worries, their activities and their joys. I wish to do so as Successor of Peter and Pastor of the universal Church, entering into this heritage of veneration and love, dedication and trust, which for centuries has been part of the Church of Brazil and of all those who form it, without considering differences of origin, race, and social position, and wherever they live in this immense country. At this moment they have all been looking to Fortaleza and asking themselves: "Where are you going?"

O Mother! Let the Church be for this Brazilian people a sacrament of salvation and a sign of the unity of all men, adopted brothers and sisters of your Son and children of the heavenly Father!

O Mother! Let this Church following the example of Christ by serving man constantly, defend everyone, especially the poor and the needy, those living on the fringes of society and in want. Let the Church of Brazil always be at the service of justice among men and at the same time contribute to the common good of all and to social peace.

O Mother! Open the hearts of men and let everyone understand that only in the spirit of the Gospel and observing the commandment of love and the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount will it be possible to construct a more human world, in which the dignity of all men will really be given new value.

O Mother! Let the Church which in this land of Brazil has carried out a great work of evangelization in the past and whose history is rich in experience, accomplish her tasks today with new zeal, with new love of the mission received from Christ. For this purpose grant her numerous priestly and religious vocations, so that the whole People of God may benefit from the ministry of the stewards of the Eucharist and of the witnesses to the Gospel.

O Mother! Accept in your heart all Brazilian families! Accept all adults and old people, the young and children! Accept the sick and all those who live in solitude! Accept workers in the fields and factories, intellectuals in schools and universities, all those who are working in any institution. Protect them all!

Do not cease, O Virgin Aparecida, to demonstrate with your own presence in this land that love is stronger than death, more powerful than sin! Do not cease to show us God, who so loved the world that he gave it his only Son, that none of us should perish but have eternal life (cf. Jn. 3:16). Amen!

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