



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**

***INTRODUCTION OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE RECITATION OF THE ROSARY***

Grotto of Massabielle, 14 August 2004

My dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Kneeling here, before the grotto of Massabielle, I feel deeply that I have reached *the goal of my pilgrimage*. This cave, where Mary appeared, is the heart of Lourdes. It reminds us of the cave of Mount Horeb where Elijah met the Lord, who spoke to him in "a still small voice" (1 Kg 19:12).

Here the Blessed Virgin asked Bernadette to recite the Rosary, as she herself told the beads. This grotto has thus become *a unique school of prayer* where Mary teaches everyone to gaze with burning love upon the face of Christ.

Lourdes is the place, then, where the Christians of France, and those from so many other nations of Europe and the world, fall to their knees and pray.

2. As pilgrims to Lourdes, we too wish this evening to retrace in prayer, together with Mary our Mother, the "mysteries" in which Jesus reveals that he is the "light of the world". We recall his promise: "He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

We wish to learn from the lowly handmaid of the Lord *an attitude of docility and openness to the word of God* and a generous commitment to welcoming Christ's teaching into our lives.

In particular, as we meditate on the sharing of the Lord's Mother in her Son's redemptive mission, I would ask you to pray for *vocations to the priesthood and to virginity for the Kingdom of God*, so that all those who are called will respond with generosity and perseverance.

3. As we turn to Mary Most Holy, let us pray together with Bernadette: "Good Mother, have mercy on me; I give myself entirely to you, that you may give me to your dear Son, whom I wish to love with my whole heart. Good Mother, grant me a heart all aflame for Jesus".

PRAYER OF THE HOLY FATHER
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ROSARY

(Esplanade of the Basilica of the Rosary, 14 August 2004)

Hail Mary, poor and humble Woman,
Blessed by the Most High!
Virgin of hope, dawn of a new era,
We join in your song of praise,
to celebrate the Lord's mercy,
to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom
and the full liberation of humanity.

Hail Mary, lowly handmaid of the Lord,
Glorious Mother of Christ!
Faithful Virgin, holy dwelling-place of the Word,
Teach us to persevere in listening to the Word,
and to be docile to the voice of the Spirit,
attentive to his promptings in the depths of our conscience
and to his manifestations in the events of history.

Hail Mary, Woman of sorrows,
Mother of the living!
Virgin spouse beneath the Cross, the new Eve,

Be our guide along the paths of the world.
Teach us to experience and to spread the love of Christ,
to stand with you before the innumerable crosses
on which your Son is still crucified.

Hail Mary, woman of faith,
First of the disciples!
Virgin Mother of the Church, help us always
to account for the hope that is in us,
with trust in human goodness and the Father's love.
Teach us to build up the world beginning from within:
in the depths of silence and prayer,
in the joy of fraternal love,
in the unique fruitfulness of the Cross.

Holy Mary, Mother of believers,
Our Lady of Lourdes,
pray for us.
Amen.