



“Making Memory of His Legacy to Strengthen Our Identity”

PILGRIMAGE TO ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

November 3rd, 2013

Theme: “Be not afraid!”

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE and CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF HOPE

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

I. The Resurrection of Our Lord

“Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?’ On entering the tomb they saw the young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe. He said to them: ‘Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.’” (Mark 16:2-6)

29. *“I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20). This assurance, dear brothers and sisters, has accompanied the Church for two thousand years, and has now been renewed in our hearts by the celebration of the Jubilee. From it we must gain new impetus in Christian living, making it the force which inspires our journey of faith. Conscious of the Risen Lord’s presence among us, we ask ourselves today the same question put to Peter in Jerusalem immediately after his Pentecost speech: “What must we do?” (Acts 2:37).*

We put the question with trusting optimism, but without underestimating the problems we face. We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you! It is not therefore a matter of inventing a “new program”. The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium.

Mother of the Church, pray for us!

II. The Ascension of Our Lord into Heaven

“Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, ‘Behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with

power from on high." Then he led them [out] as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven." (Luke 24:45-51)

58. Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work. Did we not celebrate the Jubilee Year in order to refresh our contact with this living source of our hope? Now, the Christ whom we have contemplated and loved bids us to set out once more on our journey: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians: we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope "which does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5).

40. To nourish ourselves with the word in order to be "servants of the word" in the work of evangelization: this is surely a priority for the Church at the dawn of the new millennium. Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a "Christian society" which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone. Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of "globalization" and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures. Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the new evangelization. I do so again now, especially in order to insist that we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardor of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16).

Mother of the Church, pray for us!

III. The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Our Blessed Mother

"When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim." (Acts 2:1-4)

43. To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings.

But what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could run immediately to the action to be undertaken, but that would not be the right impulse to follow. Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up. A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship.

A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me". A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to "make room" for our brothers and sisters, bearing "each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth."

Mother of the Church, pray for us!

IV. The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven

"And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.' (Luke 1:46-50)

58. At the beginning of this new century, our steps must quicken as we travel the highways of the world. Many are the paths on which each one of us and each of our Churches must travel, but there is no distance between those who are united in the same communion, the communion which is daily nourished at the table of the Eucharistic Bread and the Word of Life. Every Sunday, the Risen Christ asks us to meet him as it were once more in the Upper Room where, on the evening of "the first day of the week" (Jn 20:19) he appeared to his disciples in order to "breathe" on them his life-giving Spirit and launch them on the great adventure of proclaiming the Gospel.

On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom, a few months ago, in the presence of a great number of Bishops assembled in Rome from all parts of the world, I entrusted the Third Millennium. During this year I have often invoked her as the "Star of the New Evangelization". Now I point to Mary once again as the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps. Once more, echoing the words of Jesus himself and giving voice to the filial affection of the whole Church, I say to her: "Woman, behold your children"(cf. Jn 19:26).

Mother of the Church, pray for us!

V. The Coronation of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven and Earth

"Blessed are you, daughter, by the Most High God, above all the women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, the creator of heaven and earth. Your deed of hope will never be forgotten by those who tell of the might of God, because you risked your life when your people were being oppressed, and you averted our disaster, walking uprightly before our God." (Jd3:18-20)

(Crossing the Threshold of Hope, chapter "Be not afraid")

The exhortation "Be not afraid!" should be interpreted as having a very broad meaning. In a certain sense it was an exhortation addressed to all people, an exhortation to conquer fear in the present world situation, as much in the East as in the West, as much in the North as in the South.

Have no fear of that which you yourselves have created, have no fear of all that man has produced, and that every day is becoming more dangerous for him! Finally, have no fear of yourselves! Why should we have no fear? Because man has been redeemed by God. When pronouncing these words in St. Peter's Square, I already knew that my first encyclical and my entire papacy would be tied to the truth of the Redemption. In the Redemption we find the most profound basis for the words "Be not afraid!": "For God so loved the world that

"he gave his only Son" (cf. Jn 3:16). This Son is always present in the history of humanity as Redeemer. The Redemption pervades all of human history, even before Christ, and prepares its eschatological future. It is the light that "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (cf. Jn 1:5). The power of Christ's Cross and Resurrection is greater than any evil which man could or should fear. "Be not afraid!" Christ said to the apostles (cf. Lk 24:36) and to the women (cf. Mt 28:10) after the Resurrection. According to the Gospels, these words were not addressed to Mary. Strong in her faith, she had no fear. Mary's participation in the victory of Christ became clear to me above all from the experience of my people. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński told me that his predecessor, Cardinal August Hlond, had spoken these prophetic words as he was dying: "The victory, if it comes, will come through Mary." During my pastoral ministry in Poland, I saw for myself how those words were coming true.

After my election as Pope, as I became more involved in the problems of the universal Church, I came to have a similar conviction: On this universal level, if victory comes it will be brought by Mary. Christ will conquer through her, because He wants the Church's victories now and in the future to be linked to her.

Mother of the Church, pray for us!



Totus Tuus!