



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO POLAND
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXXI WORLD YOUTH DAY
(27-31 JULY 2016)

HOLY MASS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 1050th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAPTISM OF
POLAND

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Area near the Shrine of Częstochowa
Thursday, 28 July 2016

[Multimedia]

From the readings of this Liturgy a divine thread emerges, one that passes through human history and weaves the history of salvation.

The apostle Paul tells us of God's great plan: "*When the fullness of time had come, God sent his son, born of a woman*" (*Gal 4:4*). But history tells us that when this "fullness of time" came, when God became man, humanity was not especially well-disposed, nor was there even a period of stability and peace: there was no "Golden Age". The scenario of this world did not merit the coming of God; indeed, "his own received him not" (*Jn 1:11*). The fullness of time was thus a gift of grace: *God filled our time out of the abundance of his mercy*. Out of sheer love, he inaugurated the fullness of time.

It is particularly striking *how* the coming of God into history came about: he was "*born of a woman*". There was no triumphal entrance or striking epiphany of the Almighty. He did not reveal himself as a brilliantly rising sun, but entered the world in the simplest of ways, as a child from his mother, with that "style" that Scripture tells us is like a rainfall upon the land (cf. *Is 55:10*), like the smallest of seeds which sprouts and grows (cf. *Mk 4:31-32*). Thus, contrary to our expectations

and perhaps even our desires, the kingdom of God, now as then, “does not come in a way that attracts attention” (*Lk 17:20*), but rather *in littleness, in humility*.

Today’s Gospel takes up this divine thread delicately passing through history: from the fullness of time we come to the “third day” of Jesus’ ministry (cf. *Jn 2:1*) and the proclamation of the “hour” of salvation (cf. v. 4). Time shortens, God always shows himself in littleness. And so we come to “*the first of the signs that Jesus did*” (v. 11), in Cana of Galilee.

There is no amazing deed done before the crowd, or even a word to settle a heated political question like that of the subjection of the people to the power of Rome. Instead, in a small village, a simple miracle takes place and brings joy to the wedding of a young and completely anonymous family. At the same time, the water that became wine at the wedding banquet is a great sign, for it reveals to us the spousal face of God, a God who sits at table with us, who dreams and holds communion with us. It tells us that the Lord does not keep his distance, but is *near* and *real*. He is in our midst and he takes care of us, without making decisions in our place and without troubling himself with issues of power. He prefers to let himself be contained in little things, unlike ourselves, who always want to possess something greater. To be attracted by power, by grandeur, by appearances, is tragically human. It is a great temptation that tries to insinuate itself everywhere. But to give oneself to others, eliminating distances, dwelling in littleness and living the reality of one’s everyday life: this is exquisitely divine.

God saves us, then by making himself *little, near* and *real*. First God makes himself *little*. The Lord, who is “meek and humble of heart” (*Mt 11:29*), especially loves the little ones, to whom the kingdom of God is revealed (*Mt 11:25*); they are great in his eyes and he looks to them (cf. *Is 66:2*). He especially loves them because they are opposed to the “pride of life” that belongs to the world (cf. *1 Jn 2:16*). The little ones speak his own language, that of the humble love that brings freedom. So he calls the simple and receptive to be his spokespersons; he entrusts to them the revelation of his name and the secrets of his heart. Our minds turn to so many sons and daughters of your own people, like the martyrs made the defenseless power of the Gospel shine forth, like those ordinary yet remarkable people who bore witness to the Lord’s love amid great trials, and those meek and powerful heralds of mercy who were Saint John Paul II and Saint Faustina. Through these “channels” of his love, the Lord has granted priceless gifts to the whole Church and to all mankind. It is significant that this anniversary of the baptism of your people exactly coincides with the Jubilee of mercy.

Then too, God is *near*, his kingdom is at hand (cf. *Mk 1:15*). The Lord does not want to be feared like a powerful and aloof sovereign. He does not want to remain on his throne in heaven or in history books, but loves to come down to our everyday affairs, to walk with us. As we think of the gift of a millennium so filled with faith, we do well before all else to thank God for having walked with your people, having taken you by the hand, as a father takes the hand of his child, and accompanied you in so many situations. That is what we too, in the Church, are constantly called

to do: to listen, to get involved and be neighbours, sharing in people's joys and struggles, so that the Gospel can spread every more consistently and fruitfully: radiating goodness through the transparency of our lives.

Finally, *God is real*. Today's readings make it clear that everything about God's way of acting is real and concrete. Divine wisdom "is like a master worker" and "plays" (cf. *Prov* 8:30). The Word becomes flesh, is born of a mother, is born under the law (cf. *Gal* 4:4), has friends and goes to a party. The eternal is communicated by spending time with people and in concrete situations. Your own history, shaped by the Gospel, the Cross and fidelity to the Church, has seen the contagious power of a genuine faith, passed down from family to family, from fathers to sons and above all from mothers and grandmothers, whom we need so much to thank. In particular, you have been able to touch with your hand the real and provident tenderness of the Mother of all, whom I have come here as a pilgrim to venerate and whom we have acclaimed in the Psalm as the "great pride of our nation" (*Jud* 15:9).

It is to Mary, then that we, who have gathered here, now look. In her, we find complete conformity to the Lord. Throughout history, interwoven with the divine thread, is also a "Marian thread". If there is any human glory, any merit of our own in the fullness of time, it is she. Mary is that space, preserved free from sin, where God chose to mirror himself. She is the stairway God took to descend and draw near to us. She is the clearest sign of the fullness of time.

In the life of Mary we admire that *littleness* that God loves, for he "looked upon the humility of his servant", and "lifted up the lowly" (*Lk* 1:48, 52). He was so pleased with her that he let his flesh be woven from hers, so that the Virgin became the *Mother of God*, as an ancient hymn, sung for centuries, proclaims. To you who uninterruptedly come to her, converging upon this, the spiritual capital of the country, may she continue to point the way. May she help you to weave in your own lives the humble and simple thread of the Gospel.

At Cana, as here in Jasna Góra, Mary offers us her *nearness* and helps us to discover what we need to live life to the full. Now as then, she does this with a mother's love, by her presence and counsel, teaching us to avoid hasty decisions and grumbling in our communities. As the Mother of a family, she wants to keep us *together*. Through unity, the journey of your people has surmounted any number of harsh experiences. May the Mother, who stood steadfast at the foot of the Cross and persevered in prayer with the disciples in awaiting the Holy Spirit, obtain for you the desire to leave behind all past wrongs and wounds, and to build fellowship with all, without ever yielding to the temptation to withdraw or to domineer.

At Cana, Our Lady showed great *realism*. She is a Mother who takes people's problems to heart and acts. She recognizes moments of difficulty and handles them discreetly, efficiently and decisively. She is neither imperious nor intrusive, but a Mother and a handmaid. Let us ask for the grace to imitate her sensitivity and her creativity in serving those in need, and to know how

beautiful it is to spend our lives in the service of others, without favourites or distinctions. May Mary, Cause of our Joy, who brings peace amid the profusion of sin and the turmoil of history, obtain for us the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and enable us to be good and faithful servants

Through her intercession, may the fullness of time come about also for us. The transition from before to after Christ means little if it remains a date in the annals of history. May each one of us be able to make an interior passage, a Passover of the heart, towards the *divine "style" incarnated by Mary*. May we do everything in littleness, and accompany others at close hand, with a simple and open heart.