



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF
KNOCK
TO AN INTERNATIONAL SHRINE OF SPECIAL EUCHARISTIC AND MARIAN DEVOTION**

[19 March 2021]

[Multimedia]

Brothers and sisters, good evening!

I wish to take advantage of the media to be with you at such an important time in the life of the Shrine.

Ever since the apparition of 21 August 1879, when the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to some villagers in Knock together with Saint Joseph and Saint John the Apostle, the Irish people have expressed their devotion wherever they have been. You have been a people of missionaries. It is good to remember how many priests left their land to become evangelisers. Nor can we forget the many lay people who emigrated to many lands and kept alive their devotion to Our Lady of Knock. How many families, over the course of almost a century and a half, have passed on the faith to their children and gathered their daily labours around the prayer of the Rosary with the image of Our Lady of Knock at its centre! The arms of the Virgin Mary in a praying position still show how fundamental the life of prayer is, which comes as a message of hope from this Shrine. You know that in the apparition of Knock the Virgin does not say a word. But even her silence is a language; indeed, it is the most expressive language that is given to us. The message from Knock is the great value of silence for faith.

It is silence before the mystery, which does not mean renouncing understanding, but understanding sustained and assisted by the mystery of the love of Jesus who offered himself for

all of us, as the Lamb sacrificed for the salvation of humanity. It is silence before the great mystery of love, which finds no possible response other than to surrender oneself with trust to the will of the merciful Father. Finally, it is the silence that Jesus asked for when he taught us: “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Mt 6:6-8).

Dear brothers and sisters present in Knock, and all of you who are following this solemn moment through the new communications media! To have raised the national Shrine of Our Lady of Knock to an international Shrine of special Eucharistic and Marian devotion is a great responsibility. You commit yourselves to keeping your arms always wide open in a sign of welcome to every pilgrim who reaches you from every part of the world, without asking him anything, only recognising him or her as a brother or sister who wishes to share the same experience of prayer in mutual fraternity. May welcome be combined with charity and become an effective testimony of a heart that opens to receive the Word of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit that gives strength. May the mystery of the Eucharist, which unites us in communion with the Risen Lord and with each other, always be the support for us to live faithfully our vocation to be missionary disciples, as was the Virgin Mary, who made herself a pilgrim of the Gospel of her Son. May she protect us and console us with her merciful face.

I greet you, I greet you all, imploring a blessing for you, and I ask you, please, to pray for me!

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