

WORLD WE LIVE IN HAS GREAT NEED OF GOD

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VATICAN CITY, 1 JUN 2010 (VIS) -

The traditional procession marking the end of the month of May took place yesterday at 8:00pm in the Vatican Gardens. As the rosary was recited, the procession wound from the Church of St. Stephen of the Abyssinians to the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The Pope arrived at the Grotto of Lourdes at 9:00pm and briefly addressed the present faithful before imparting the apostolic blessing.

Remarking on the festivity of the day, the Visitation of the Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, the Holy Father commented that with this gesture "we recognize the clearest example and the truest meaning of our path as believers and the path of the Church itself. By its nature, the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel everywhere and at all times, to spread the faith to every man and woman and to every culture".

"Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months to offer her loving nearness, concrete assistance, and all the everyday services that were needed. In this way, Elizabeth becomes the symbol of the many aged and ill, even more, of all those who need assistance and love. How many of these persons there are today in our families, in our communities, in our cities! And Mary -- who called herself 'the handmaid of the Lord' -- made herself the servant of mankind. More specifically, she served the Lord whom she encountered in her brothers and sisters".

"It should be noted that 'Mary's charity' is not limited to concrete assistance but achieves its highest form in bestowing Jesus himself, in 'making him present'", the Pope said. "This is the heart and the height of the evangelical mission. This is the true meaning and the most genuine purpose of every missionary path: to offer human beings the living and personal Gospel, which is the Lord Jesus himself".

"Jesus", he continued, "is the true and only treasure that we have to give humanity. Today's men and women have a profound longing for Him, including when it seems they are ignoring or rejecting Him. The society we live in, Europe, the entire world has great need of Him".

The Holy Father concluded by underlining that "we have been entrusted with this extraordinary responsibility. Let us live it with joy and devotion so that ours might truly be a civilization in which truth, justice, liberty, and love reign, the fundamental and irreplaceable pillars of a truly shared life that is ordered and peaceful. Let us live this responsibility remaining steadfast in listening to the Word of God, in communal life, in breaking of the bread, and in our prayers. May this be the grace that together this evening we ask of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary".