



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO ROMANIA

[31 MAY - 2 JUNE 2019]

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS

Shrine of Sumuleu-Ciuc

Saturday, 1 June 2019

[Multimedia]

With joy and thanksgiving to God, I join you today, dear brothers and sisters, in this beloved Marian shrine, so rich in history and faith. We have come here as children to meet our Mother and to acknowledge that we are all brothers and sisters. Shrines are like “sacraments” of a Church that is a field hospital: they keep alive the memory of God’s faithful people who, in the midst of tribulation, continue to seek the source of living water that renews our hope. They are places of festivity and celebration, of tears and supplication. We come to the feet of our Mother, with few words, to let her gaze upon us, and with that gaze bring us to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (*Jn 14:6*).

We have come here for a reason: we are pilgrims. Here, every year, on the Saturday before Pentecost, you come on pilgrimage to honour the vow made by your ancestors, and to strengthen your own faith in God and your devotion to Our Lady, before her monumental wooden statue. This annual pilgrimage is part of the heritage of Transylvania, but at the same time it honours Romanian and Hungarian religious traditions. The faithful of other confessions take part in it, and it is thus a symbol of dialogue, unity and fraternity. It invites us to rediscover the witness of living faith and hope-filled life.

To go on pilgrimage is to realize that we are in a way returning home as a people. To realize too, that we are a people. A people whose wealth is seen in its myriad faces, its myriad cultures, languages and traditions. The holy and faithful People of God who in union with Mary advance on their pilgrim way singing of the Lord's mercy. In Cana of Galilee, Mary interceded with Jesus to perform his first miracle; in every shrine, she watches over us and makes intercession, not only with her Son but also with each of us, asking that we not let ourselves be robbed of our fraternal love by those voices and hurts that provoke division and fragmentation. Complicated and sorrow-filled situations from the past must not be forgotten or denied, yet neither must they be an obstacle or an excuse standing in the way of our desire to live together as brothers and sisters.

To go on pilgrimage is to feel called and compelled to *journey together*, asking the Lord for the grace to change past and present resentments and mistrust into new opportunities for fellowship. It means leaving behind our security and comfort and setting out for a new land that the Lord wants to give us. To go on pilgrimage means daring to discover and communicate the "mystique" of living together, and not being afraid to mingle, to embrace and to support one another. To go on pilgrimage is to participate in that somewhat chaotic sea of people that can give us a genuine experience of fraternity, to be part of a caravan that can together, in solidarity, create history (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 87).

To go on pilgrimage is to look not so much at what might have been (and wasn't), but at everything that awaits us and cannot be put off much longer. It is to believe in the Lord who is coming and even now is in our midst, inspiring and generating solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 71). To go on pilgrimage is to commit ourselves to ensuring that the stragglers of yesterday can become the protagonists of tomorrow, and that today's protagonists do not become tomorrow's stragglers. And this, dear brothers and sisters, requires a certain skill, the art of weaving the threads of the future. That is why we are here today, to say together: *Mother teach us to weave the future!*

As pilgrims to this shrine, we turn our gaze to Mary and to the mystery of God's election. By saying "yes" to the message of the angel, Mary – a young woman from Nazareth, a small town in Galilee on the fringes of the Roman Empire and of Israel itself – set in motion the revolution of tenderness (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 88). Such is the mystery of God's election: he looks to the lowly and confounds the powerful; he encourages and inspires us to say "yes", like Mary, and to set out on the paths of reconciliation.

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget: the Lord does not disappoint those who take a risk. Let us journey, then, and journey together. Let us take a risk and allow the Gospel to be the leaven that permeates everything and fills our peoples with the joy of salvation, in unity and in fraternity.
