

## *His Holiness Leo XIV*

### *Holy Mass on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Holy See*

9 June 2025

St Peter's Basilica – Vatican City

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we have the joy and grace of celebrating the Jubilee of the Holy See on the liturgical memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church. This happy coincidence is a source of light and inner inspiration in the Holy Spirit, who yesterday, on Pentecost, was poured out abundantly upon the People of God. And in this spiritual climate, we are experiencing a special day: first through the meditation we heard earlier, and now here, at the Table of the Word and of the Eucharist.

The Word of God in this celebration helps us understand the mystery of the Church, and within it, that of the Holy See, through the light of two biblical icons written by the Spirit: the passage from the Acts of the Apostles (1:12–14) and the one from the Gospel of John (19:25–34).

Let us begin with the foundational one, the account of the death of Jesus. John, the only one of the Twelve present at Calvary, saw and bore witness that beneath the cross, along with the other women, stood the mother of Jesus (v. 25). And he heard with his own ears the Master's final words, including these: "Woman, behold your son!" and then, to him: "Behold your mother!" (vv. 26–27).

Mary's motherhood, through the mystery of the Cross, took an unimaginable leap: the mother of Jesus became the new Eve, because the Son associated her with His redeeming death, the source of new and eternal life for every human being who comes into this world. The theme of fruitfulness is strongly present in this liturgy. The Collect brought it to light at the very start, as we asked the Father that the Church, upheld by the love of Christ, "may be ever more fruitful in the Spirit."

The fruitfulness of the Church is the very fruitfulness of Mary; and it is realised in the lives of her members to the extent that they relive, "in small," what the Mother experienced: that is, they love with the love of Jesus. All the fruitfulness of the Church and the Holy See depends on the Cross of Christ. Otherwise, it is mere appearance — or worse. A great contemporary theologian once wrote:

"If the Church is the tree grown from the small mustard seed of the cross, then this tree is destined to produce, in turn, mustard seeds, and thus fruits that repeat the shape of the cross, because it is precisely to the cross that they owe their existence" (H.U. von Balthasar, *Cordula ovverosia il caso serio*, Brescia 1969, pp. 45–46).

In the Collect, we also asked that the Church “rejoice in the holiness of her children.” Indeed, Mary’s and the Church’s fruitfulness is inseparably linked to holiness — that is, to conformity with Christ. The Holy See is holy, as the Church is holy — in its original core, in the very fibre of which it is woven. Thus the Apostolic See both safeguards and is safeguarded by the holiness of its roots. Yet it is equally true that this holiness is also lived out in each of its members. Therefore, the best way to serve the Holy See is to strive to be holy, each of us according to our state in life and the task entrusted to us.

For example, a priest who is personally carrying a heavy cross because of his ministry, and yet goes to his office every day and tries to carry out his work with love and faith — this priest participates in and contributes to the Church’s fruitfulness. Likewise, a mother or father who is facing a difficult situation at home — a child causing worry, or a sick parent — and still carries on with commitment: that man, that woman, is fruitful with the fruitfulness of Mary and the Church.

Now let us turn to the second icon, the one written by Saint Luke at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, which depicts the mother of Jesus together with the Apostles and disciples in the Upper Room (1:12–14). This shows Mary’s motherhood towards the nascent Church, an archetypal motherhood that remains perennially present in every time and place. Above all, it is always the fruit of the Paschal Mystery, the gift of the crucified and risen Lord.

The Holy Spirit, who descends with power upon the first community, is the same Spirit whom Jesus handed over with His final breath (cf. Jn 19:30). This biblical icon is inseparable from the first: the fruitfulness of the Church is always linked to the grace flowing from Christ’s pierced Heart, together with the blood and water — symbols of the Sacraments (cf. Jn 19:34).

Mary, in the Upper Room, thanks to the maternal mission received at the foot of the Cross, is at the service of the nascent community: she is the living memory of Jesus, and as such she becomes, so to speak, the pole of attraction that harmonises differences and ensures that the prayer of the disciples is with one accord.

The Apostles are listed by name, even in this text, and as always, Peter is named first (cf. v. 13). Yet he himself — indeed, he above all — is sustained by Mary in his ministry. In the same way, Mother Church sustains the ministry of Peter’s successors with her Marian charism. The Holy See lives in a unique way the coexistence of two poles: the Marian and the Petrine. And it is the Marian pole that ensures the fruitfulness and holiness of the Petrine, through her motherhood, a gift of Christ and the Spirit.

Dearest friends, let us praise God for His Word, a lamp that lights our path, even our daily lives in service to the Holy See. And, enlightened by this Word, let us renew our prayer:

“Grant, O Father, that Your Church, upheld by the love of Christ, may be ever more fruitful in the Spirit, rejoice in the holiness of her children, and gather the entire human family into her embrace” (Collect).

Amen.